ALITA Last Order™

ANGEL ETERNAL

3

STORY & ART BY YUKITO KISHIRO

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, VOLS. 1~9

In the near future…the world is divided into the dominated and the dominators. Tiphares, a floating artificial utopia, rules the Scrapyard, the surface, absolutely. But no one knows when or why this floating city was made—or by whom.

Ido, a Tipharean cyber-doctor and denizen of the Scrapyard, finds the head of a cyborg in a pile of rubble, and miraculously rebuilds her. She awakens with no memories, and Ido names her "Alita." Slowly, the harsh life of the Scrapyard stirs the fighting spirit within her, and she begins her path to self-discovery, living as a Hunter-Warrior, or bounty-hunter.

Alita meets and falls in love with Hugo, a boy who idolizes Tiphares. When she loses Hugo, she is heartbroken. Out of desperation, she turns to the pro sport world of Motorball, where she competes against the mighty Jashugan.

In a battle with a vicious cyborg named Zapan, whose body was revamped by evil genius Desty Nova, Alita loses Ido—her only family. Even her own life hangs by a thread.

The Tipharean organization G.I.B. presents Alita with a new path, and she chooses to live the life of a TUNED, a Tipharean agent, so that she can search for Nova, who holds the key to Ido's regeneration.

In the process, Alita becomes acquainted with Figure, a mercenary, and recovers the human soul she almost lost. Still, many seem to stand in her way: Kaos, Nova's son and a master of psychometry; Den, Kaos's alter-ego and the leader of the masses that oppose Tiphares; Koyomi, one of Den's groupies; the TUNED AR series, repli

cas of—and replacements for—Alita. Bitter battles ensue, and Lou, the operator who serves as backup support for the TUNED system, is ultimately relieved of duty. Only then is the shocking truth revealed: Tipharean adults have all had their brains replaced by bio-chips!

Alita resists the hacking of her brain by Ouroboros and defeats Nova. It seems as if she has finally won, but a surprising trap awaits her as she makes her way back to Figure—Nova has regenerated himself through nano-technology. Alita is consumed in an explosion, and her brain is taken to Tiphares…

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA: LAST ORDER, VOLS. 1 & 2

Alita is resurrected by Nova, who gives her the ultimate Imaginos body. Upheaval and bloodshed rule Tiphares as its citizens descend into madness after Nova's bio-chip revelation. Jim, the young genius Nova has chosen as his successor, succumbs to despair and activates his monster robot Sachumodo. Alita battles Jim's creation and finally brings calm to the chaos.

In the depths of Tiphares, Alita finds Lou's body—a mere shell without her brain bio-chip. Devastated, Alita finds some hope in Nova's words: Lou could perhaps be brought back to life if they can find her organic brain, long ago taken to the Space City Ketheres. So Alita condescends to ride to Ketheres with Nova and his escort, the TUNED AR series…

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CONTENTS

Phase 13:
The World's Zenith!
5

Phase 14:
The King of the
Land of Robots,
and...
31

Phase 15:
I'm Sure We'll Meet
Again
63

Phase 16:
I Will Put This
World Right
95

Phase 17:
And When Their Oay
Comes...
127

Phase 18:
One Hundred
Years...!
159

HERE, TAKE ONE OF THESE.
THEY'RE *ANTIBODY* CAPSULES! THEY'LL WARD OFF INVADING NANO-MACHINES.
DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT 'EM!
BAH!
YOU FIRST!
krek
Y-YOU'RE SO DIS-TRUSTFUL...
SO THERE'S A POSSIBILITY KETHERES MIGHT BE HOSTILE?
EVEN IF IT IS... WITH *OUR* HEROIC LINEUP I DOUBT WE'LL FACE ANY REAL THREATS!
♡
BAH!
LADDER IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED I FEAR
BUT LIKE THE ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB SAYS...

PHASE 13

The World's Zenith!

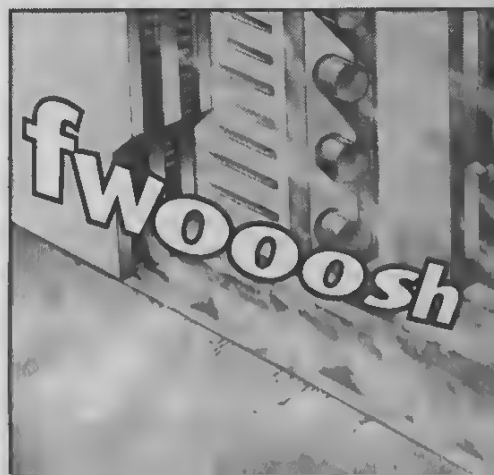
...*"TO CATCH A TIGER CUB, ONE MUST ENTER THE TIGER'S LAIR."**

**"Nothing ventured, nothing gained." Attributed to Ban Chao (approx. 32-102 AD), a Chinese general of the Eastern Han Dynasty, in Hou Hanshu ("The History of the Later Han").*

LOOK— IT'S EARTH!
WOW! PRETTY, HUH?

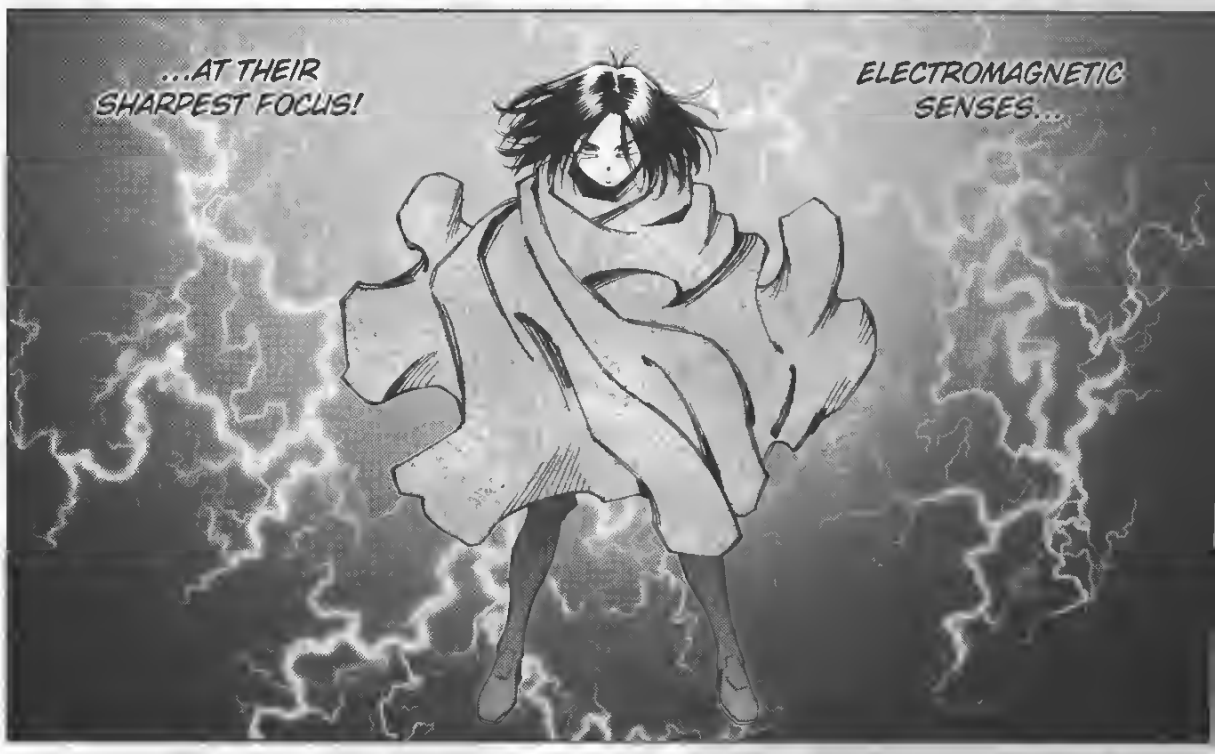
boop.
beep.
ZZZ

foom


fwoooosh

HAVE YOU TWO FORGOTTEN OUR PLAN?!
SHE'S JUST JEALOUS 'CAUSE WE'RE BEST FRIENDS.
WHO MADE HER THE BOSS OF US?!
GRRR! I'LL KILL THEM SOME DAY...
fsch
HMPH! SNEAKING AROUND AIN'T MY STYLE.
fwp
DON'T STEP OUT OF THE ELEVATOR UNTIL SECHS AND I CHECK THINGS OUT!
tmp

FEELING LIGHT IS A BONUS—BUT MOVING FAST WOULD TAKE SOME SKILL...
DOUBT THEY'VE DUG ANY PIT-FALLS...
...WITH+ GRAVITY ONLY A THIRD OF EARTH'S!

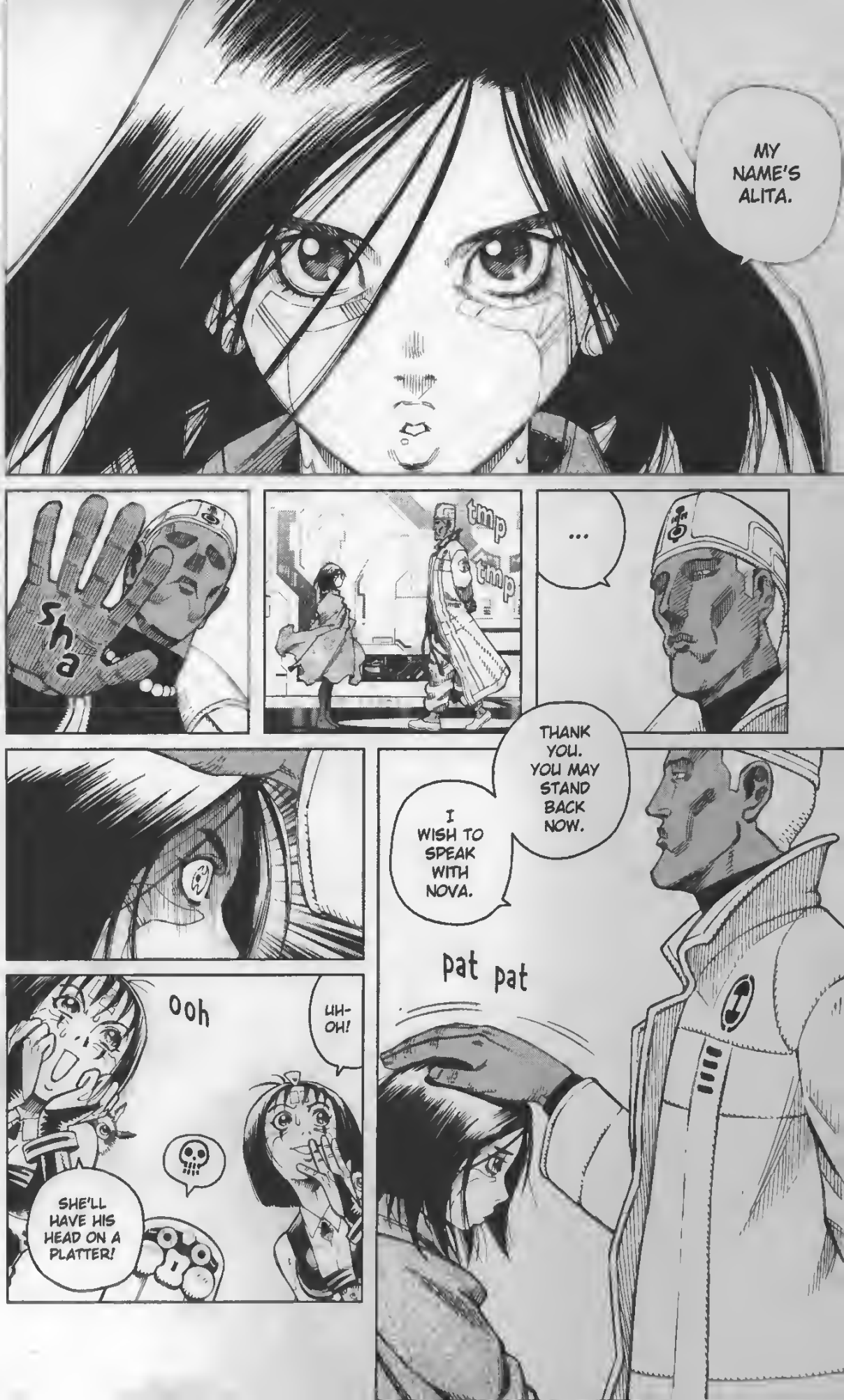

...AT THEIR SHARPEST FOCUS!
ELECTROMAGNETIC SENSES...

DAMN... SOME KIND OF SHIELD AT WORK.
OKAY, THEN...

wump
WE'RE IN DANGER!
SHOCKWAVES... THEY'RE NOT REFLECTING BACK...
grr...
I'D FIRE CANNON SHELLS MYSELF...
GOING FOR THE SONAR, EH?
IS THIS HOW YOU TREAT VISITORS ?!
HEY! ANYBODY HOME?
...NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES!
I CAN'T RETURN TO THE SURFACE WITHOUT HER!
HMPH! BIG SURPRISE THERE!
I HAVE TO BRING LOU BACK TO LIFE...

zwrr
zmm
AH... I BEG YOUR PARDON!
tmp
tmp
klnk
MY NAME IS AGA MBADI.
I AM THE HITECHNOLAT MINISTER AND LADDER ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN.
NOT A HOLO-GRAM.
NORMAL BODY TEMP. FLESH AND BLOOD. UNARMED.
ECHO-LOCA-TION THIS TIME.
grr grr
I'D SNAP A COUPLA LIMBS FIRST...

WELCOME TO KETHERES.
THIS... IS THE WORLD'S ZENITH.


MY NAME'S ALITA.
sha
tmp
tmp
...
THANK YOU. YOU MAY STAND BACK NOW.
I WISH TO SPEAK WITH NOVA.
pat pat
ooh
UH-OH!
SHE'LL HAVE HIS HEAD ON A PLATTER!

DESTY NOVA.
YOU ARE OUR SON.
tmp
tmp
HUH?
IS SAVING HER PAL THAT IMPORTANT?!
WHERE'S HER PRIDE?!
THE G.E.N.E. PROJECT.
WHAT AN ODD THING TO SAY...
THERE WAS NO DNA EXCHANGE BETWEEN KETHERES AND TIPHARES

THE GENETIC-ENGINEERING NURTURED HYPER-INTELLIGENCE PROJECT EMPLOYED THE TIPHARES DNA ORGAN...
...TO GENERATE SUPERIOR INTELLECT. GENIUSES ARE INTRINSICALLY DANGEROUS, BUT TIPHARES WAS A SAFELY ISOLATED TEST ENVIRONMENT.
LADDER CONCEIVED G.E.N.E. 154 YEARS AGO.
ONLY *FOUR* AMONG THE REMAINING ONE PERCENT OUTWITTED THE M.I.B. AND SURVIVED A VARIETY OF HARDSHIPS TO ARRIVE HERE. *YOU* ARE THAT FOURTH.
NINETY-NINE PERCENT WERE UNSTABLE. THEY WERE FATED TO EITHER COMMIT SUICIDE OR BE SENTENCED AS GENETICALLY PREDISPOSED CRIMINALS.
WE WELCOME YOU AS OUR SON.
YOU HAVE PASSED THE TEST.

OF COURSE, I KNEW...
...THAT MR. ROSCOE AND I HAD BEEN... *MANU-FACTURED.*
NOVA ...
HE MUST HAVE FOUND OUT WHEN HE REACHED THE DNA ORGAN.
BUT HIS PSYCHE WAS INSUFFICIENTLY DIABOLICAL. MR. ROSCOE WASN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE TRUTH OF HIS CONTRIVED NATIVITY.
FREE WILL IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT!
HOW WE LIVE IS ALL THAT MATTERS— NOT *WHO* MADE US, OR OUT OF *WHAT* PARTS!
GENIUSES, FIGHTER ANDROIDS, CLONES...
...IT'S ALL THE SAME!

...HE'S SOUGHT FREEDOM JUST LIKE ME!
DESTY NOVA! SO ALL THESE YEARS...
ONE QUESTION, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
YOU MAY STEP OUT OF THE ELEVATOR NOW...
HEH, HEH... CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR PREDECES-SORS?
THE THREE TIPHAREANS WHO CAME HERE BEFORE ME—WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW?
gwm
I SEE...
ALITA?
THE NANOTECH INDUSTRY, FOR INSTANCE. IMMORTALITY IS IN REACH— I'LL BE 222 YEARS OLD THIS YEAR!
THEY'RE STILL HARD AT WORK.

YOU DON'T MIND PLAYING HOSTAGE, DO YOU? JUST UNTIL WE KNOW WE'RE SAFE HERE.
krek
!
grmp
...THOUGH I'D BE MORE CAREFUL IN REGARD TO TOUCHING A POTENTIAL ENEMY...
IT IS WISE TO BE WARY...
NOW, NOW!
OWW!
SOME-THING'S WRONG— GET BACK!
tip tip
Squee!
HMM?
I wanna fire some-thing off

fwsh
GYAH?!
HUH?!
gwom
Chuk
Chak
ZAP
LOFT

ZOIT
ZIP
ZAP
UNH?!
CUT IT OUT! MAKE THIS STOP OR I'LL...
IDIOT! ACT FIRST, THREATEN LATER!
FWING
KNK
SKSH
...GET ME...
?! I-I CAN'T...
THAT SLOW-ASS THROW WON'T...
JING
HEH... SO THERE'S ONE MORE!
SNIK

zip
slikt
...M-MO...
wmmm
UNH ...?!
BUT HE'S FLESH AND BLOOD— HE CAN'T...!
fwsh
tmp
tnk

YOU'RE BUILT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY FROM THE OTHER ANDROIDS.
fup
I GET IT NOW... HE ISN'T STRONGER THAN ME— THEY'VE *HACKED* MY BODY!
I...I'M *NOT* A ROBOT!
IT TOOK PHYSICAL CONTACT TO ACCESS YOU.

UNH!
GO ON! KISS IT!
THIS IS FOR TWISTING MY ARM.
...
...

Vvvm!
vip
Slash

THE CUBE POLYMER DRAINS THE ENERGY FROM THE NANOBOTS, REDUCING THEIR SPEED 10,000-FOLD.
IT'S IMPOS-SIBLE TO BREAK FREE.
tink
tunk

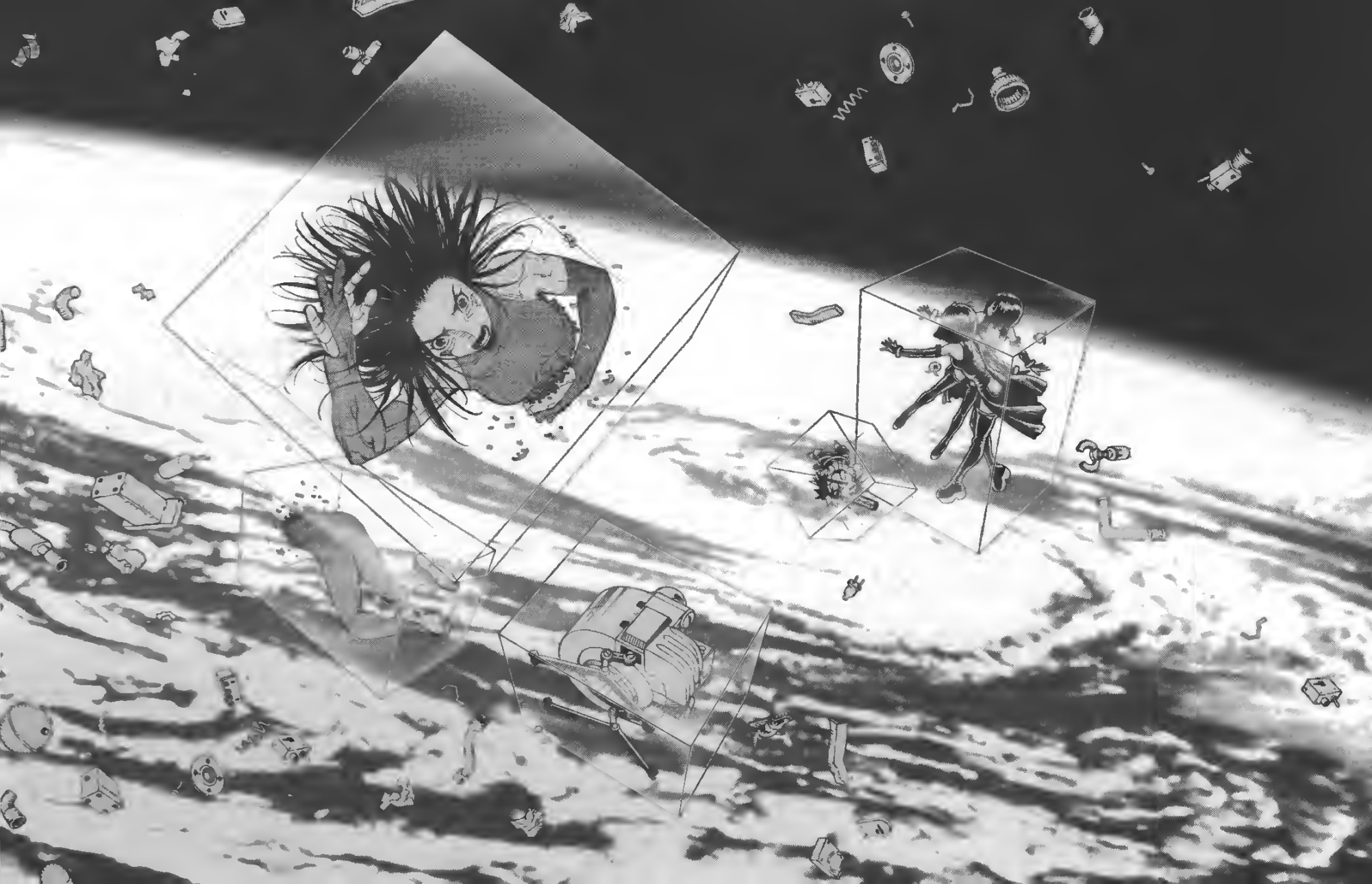
zOlt
zup

THE OTHER GENIUSES *ARE* STILL ALIVE...
...INSIDE MY *SKULL!*
WHAT I SAID WAS NO LIE.

NOVA!

THAT'S HOW I GOT MY ALIAS— "TRINIDAD."
...I MIGHT HAVE TO CHANGE MY NICKNAME TO QUADRA! HAH...
HEH, HEH! IF I ADD *YOUR* BRAIN BIO-CHIP...

tunk
klunk
UTTER DEFEAT... I'M COMPLETELY POWERLESS!
LOU...!
WAAH! I DON'T WANNA DIE IN THIS DORKY POSITION!
DON'T THROW ME OUT!
AT LEAST WE WILL DIE TOGETHER, MASTER!
foom



Scaner's Notes

These scans are done at 300 dpi
and are in the raw format.
no cleaning or contrast adjustments
have been made. This is a problem
because my scaner's bulb is going out.
You may notice that the right of the pages
are a little darker than the left.
I may clean or rescan them at a later date.
Enjoy.
Shades

On the new VIZ format.
As a reader I love the new format,
as a scanner I hate it.
They have a really strong binding
which is good and I don't mind
the extra effort to undo it to scan.
However the printing is a cheapie.
The images are not aligned on the page
and this makes quality scaning difficult.

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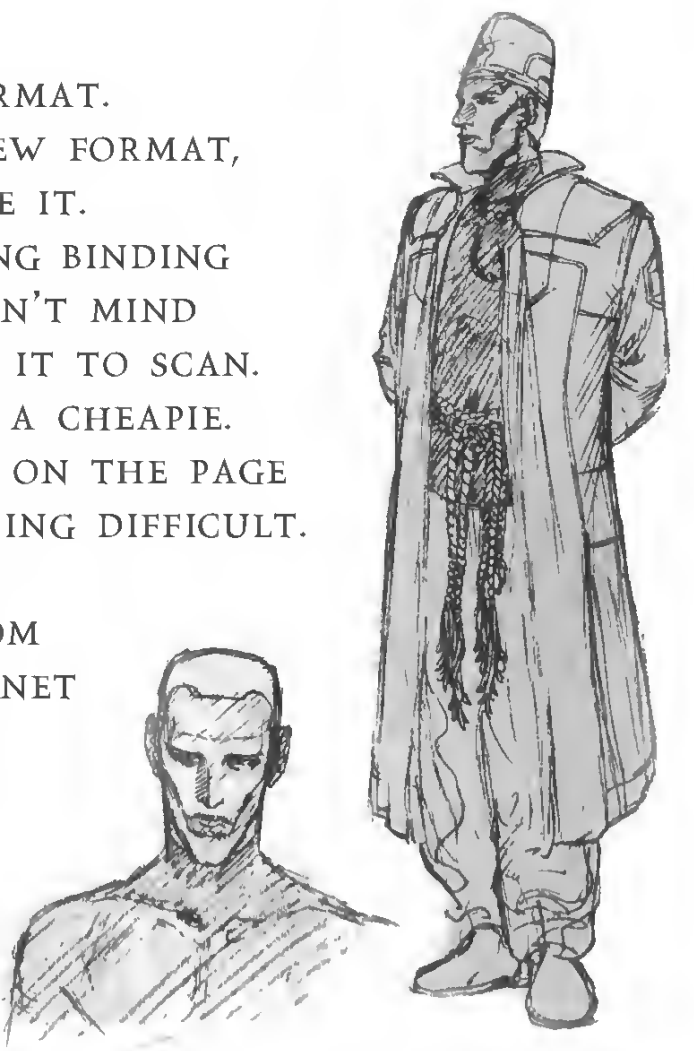
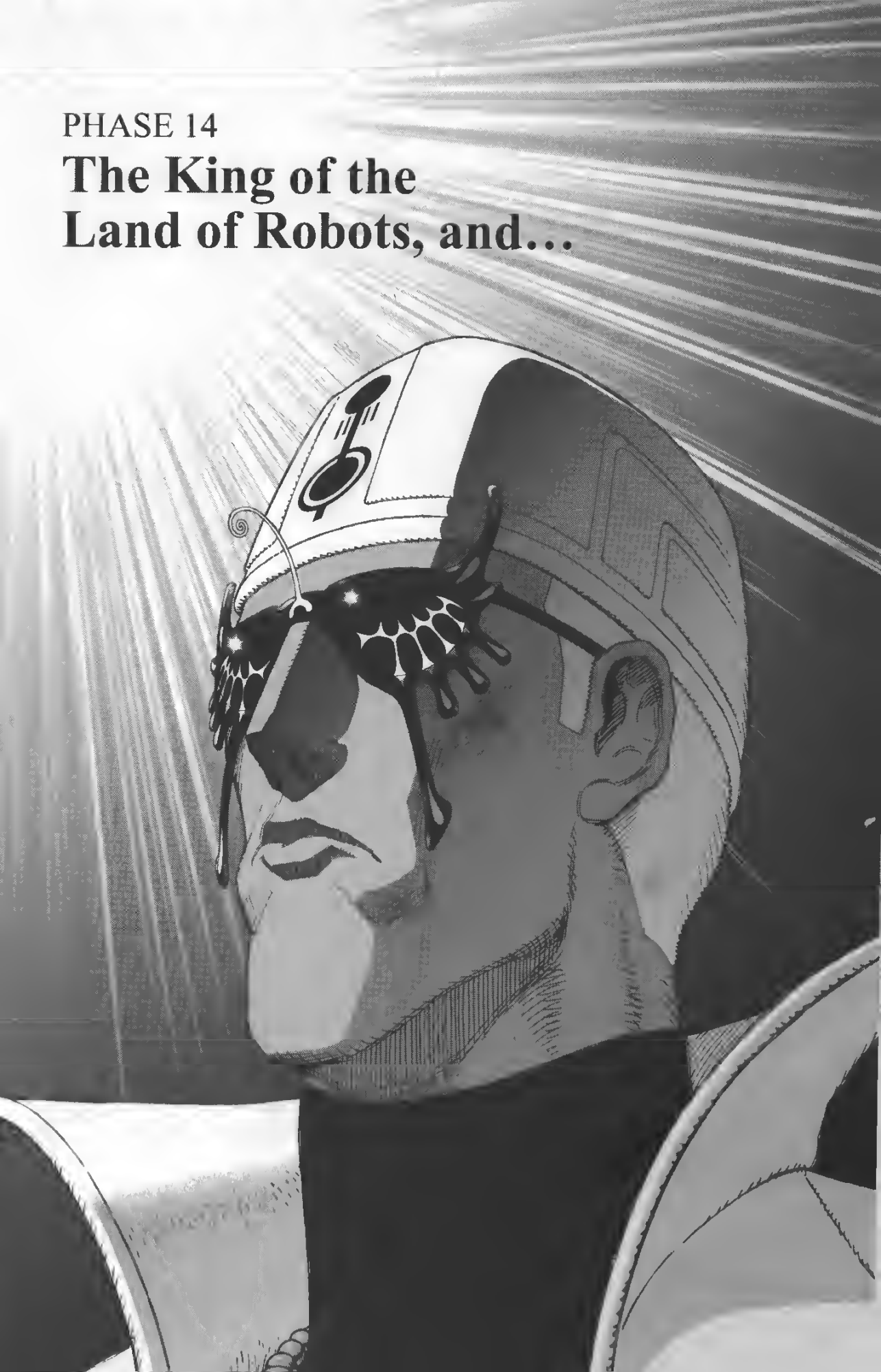


PHASE 14

The King of the Land of Robots, and…



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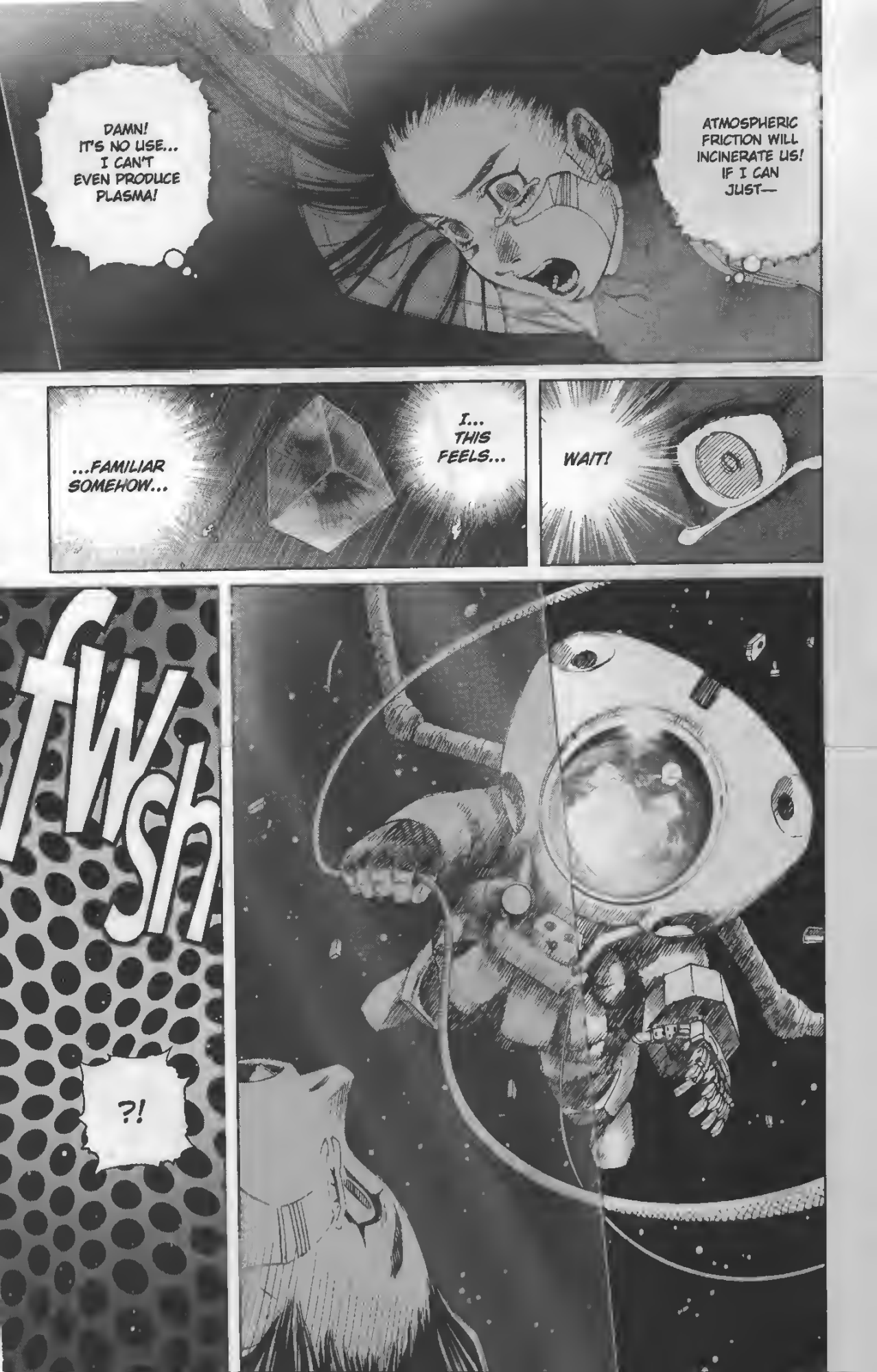
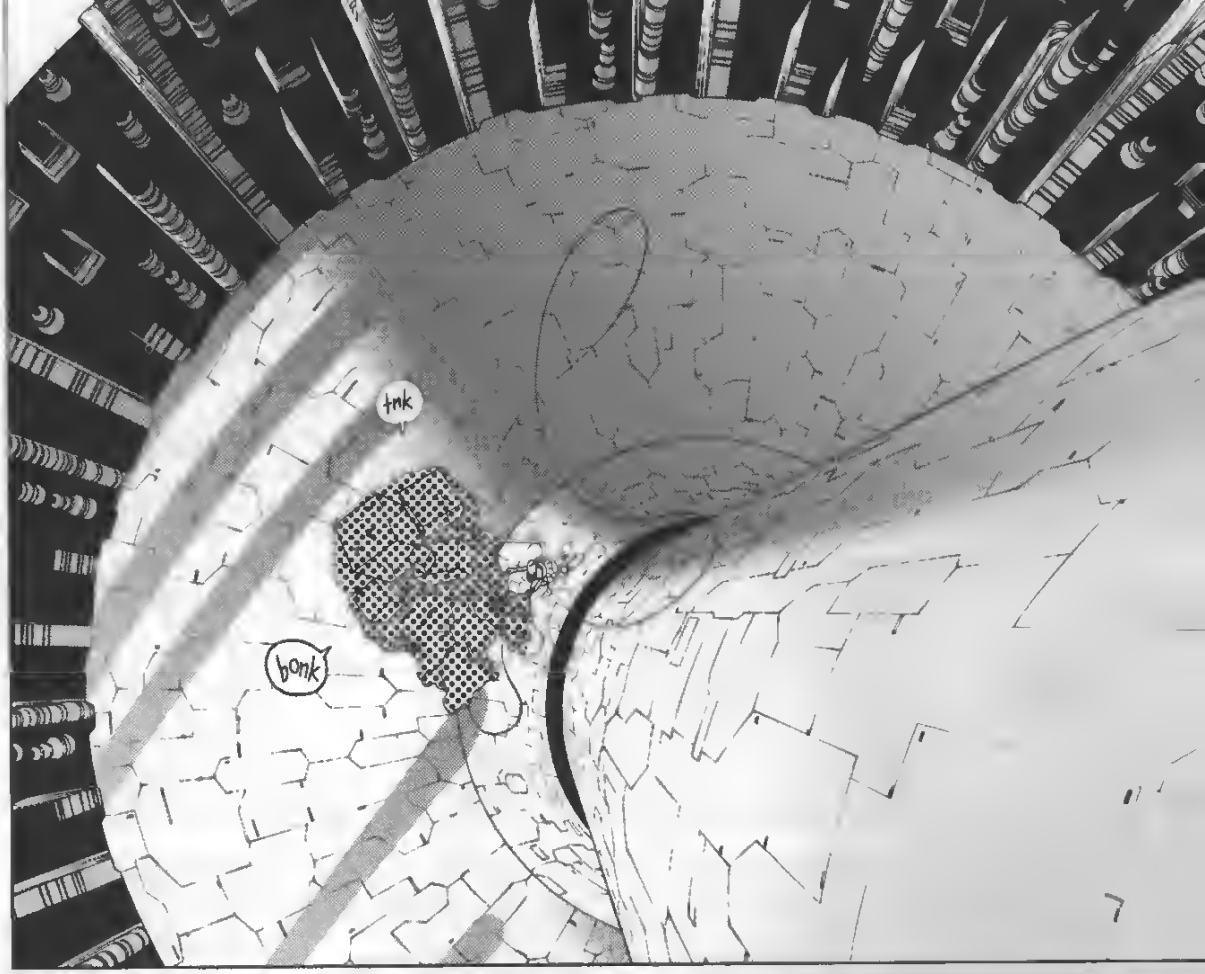
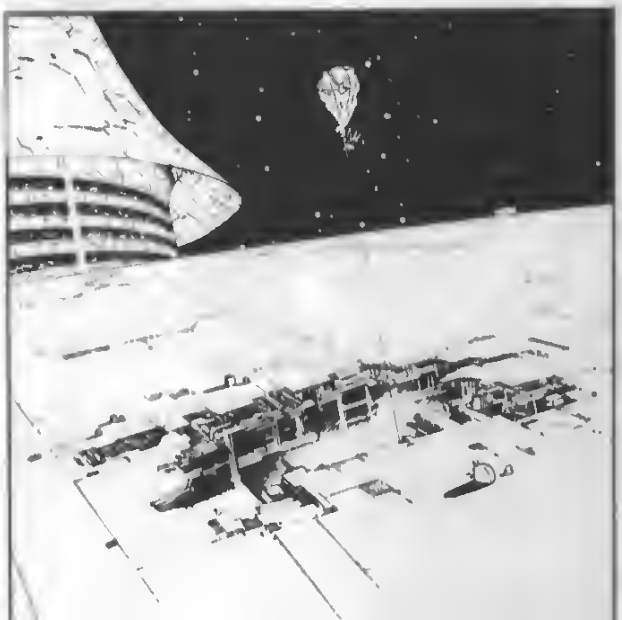
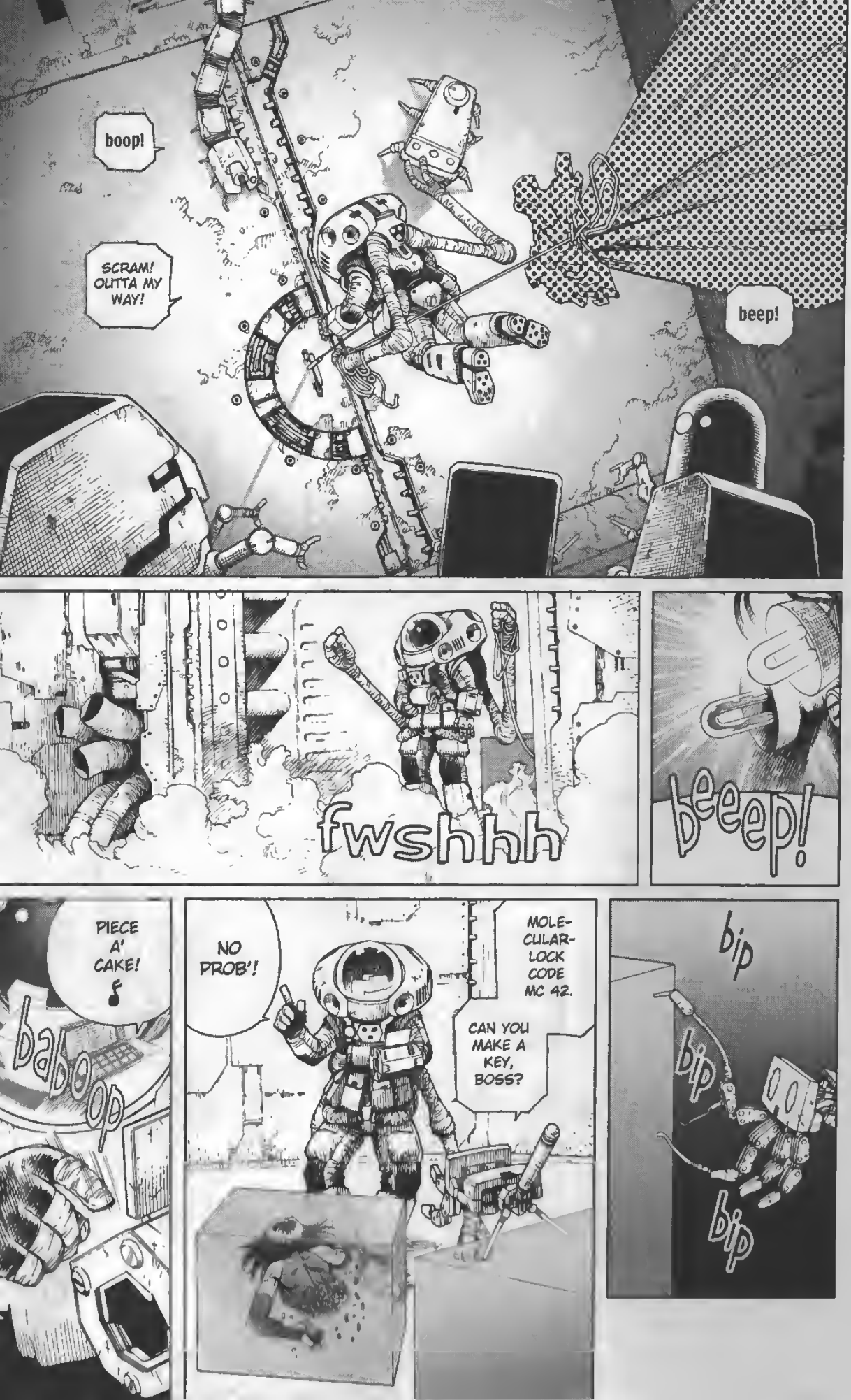

DAMN! IT'S NO USE... I CAN'T EVEN PRODUCE PLASMA!
ATMOSPHERIC FRICTION WILL INCINERATE US! IF I CAN JUST—
...FAMILIAR SOMEHOW...
I... THIS FEELS...
WAIT!
fWsh
?!


tnk
bonk

BUT BY FRIEND... OR FOE?
YAY! ♡ WE'RE SAVED!

klnk

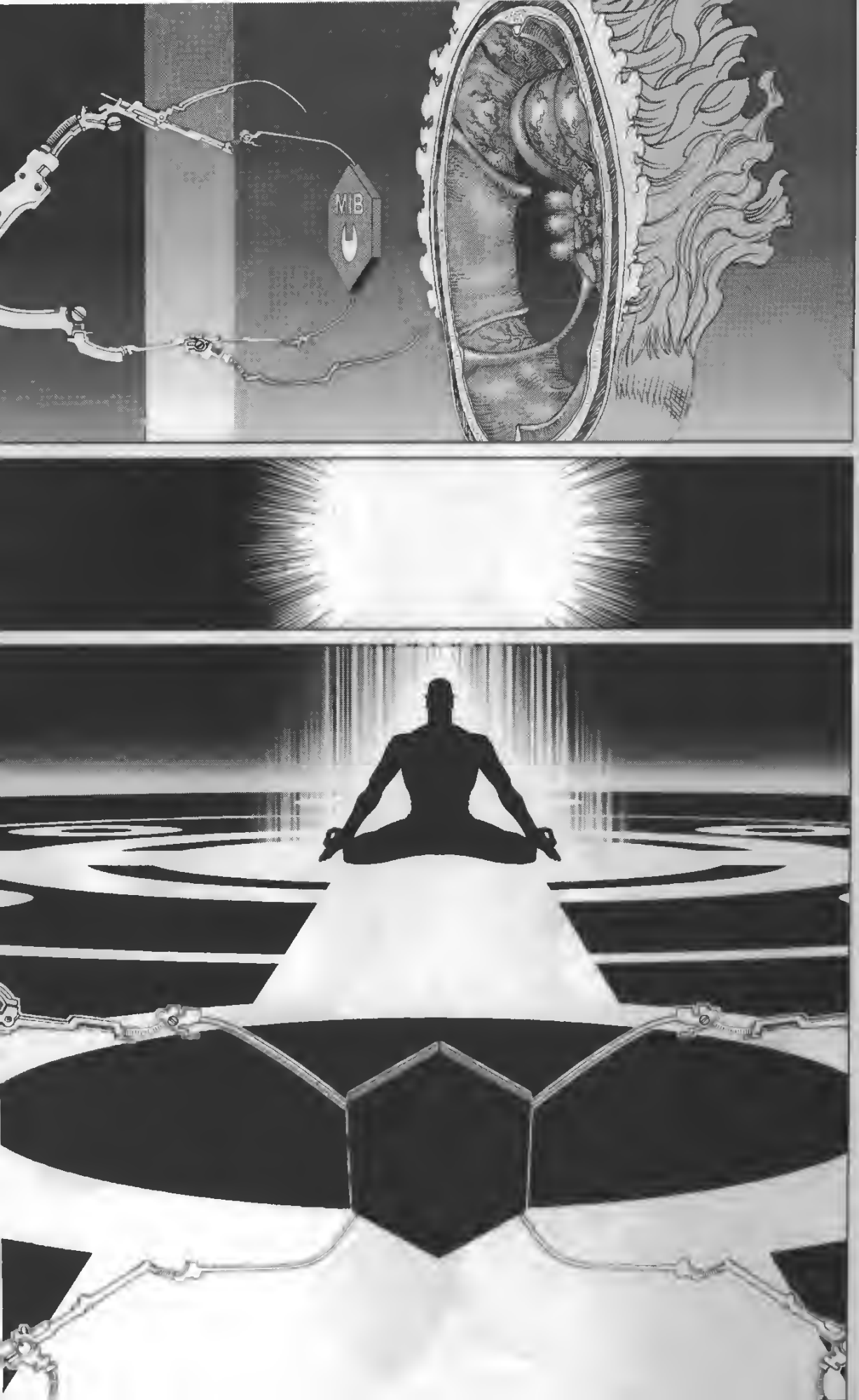



boop!
SCRAM! OUTTA MY WAY!
beep!
fwshhh
beeep!
PIECE A' CAKE!
baboop
NO PROB'!
MOLE-CULAR-LOCK CODE MC 42.
CAN YOU MAKE A KEY, BOSS?
bip
bip
bip

blorst
blbl
PICKING A FIGHT WITH TRINIDAD OF ALL PEOPLE...
klik
fzzt
-KOFF-
-KOFF-
sPlssh
URP...
-KOFF-

THERE'S NOTHING AS HAZARDOUS AS IGNORANCE.
SNFF...
DAMN! DAMN! DAMN!
WAAH!
bam bam
UNH...

zlip
whrrr


MB

THIS ASSIMILATION WILL BE AN ORDEAL LIKE NO OTHER.
ﾌｭｭｭ

tug
teg
THE FATE OF THE GALAXY...
haah
fuuu
...MAY WELL HANG IN THE BALANCE.
THE CEREMONY MUST BE FLAWLESS.
OM.
THE LADDER SESSION BEGINS.
BUT I HAVE PLENTY OF TIME...
haah

...SO EMOTIONAL— LIKE IT'S GOT PMS!
THIS ONE ROBOT...
I...I'M SORRY...
BUT JUST SO YOU KNOW—I'M NOT A ROBOT!
THOUGHT YOU WERE A ROBO-CAT!
TOO BAD! ALL YOU NEED IS A POCKET!
JUST A JOKE!
NO HARM DONE!
heh heh
KALE HERE IS MY PARTNER— COMES IN HANDY.
MY NAME'S PING...
PING WU.
NICE TA MEETCHA.

I'LL THAW THESE PESTS LATER.
CIRCUMSTANCES OUT THERE FORCED ME TO MOVE HERE. IT'S BEEN A HUNDRED YEARS NOW.
RELAX! YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE.
ROBO-ASYL IS THE SIDE OF KETHERES PEOPLE DON'T TALK ABOUT MUCH.
NO FAIR!
THE NERVE!
"THANK YOU"?
THAT'S IT?
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME!
.....
OHH!
THAT WAS CLOSE... THANKS.
MY NAME'S ALITA.
WUZZAT? I DIDN'T HEAR.
HUH?
YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THAT REPAYS ME FOR SAVING YOUR LIFE, DO YOU?
LEMME GET THIS STRAIGHT.

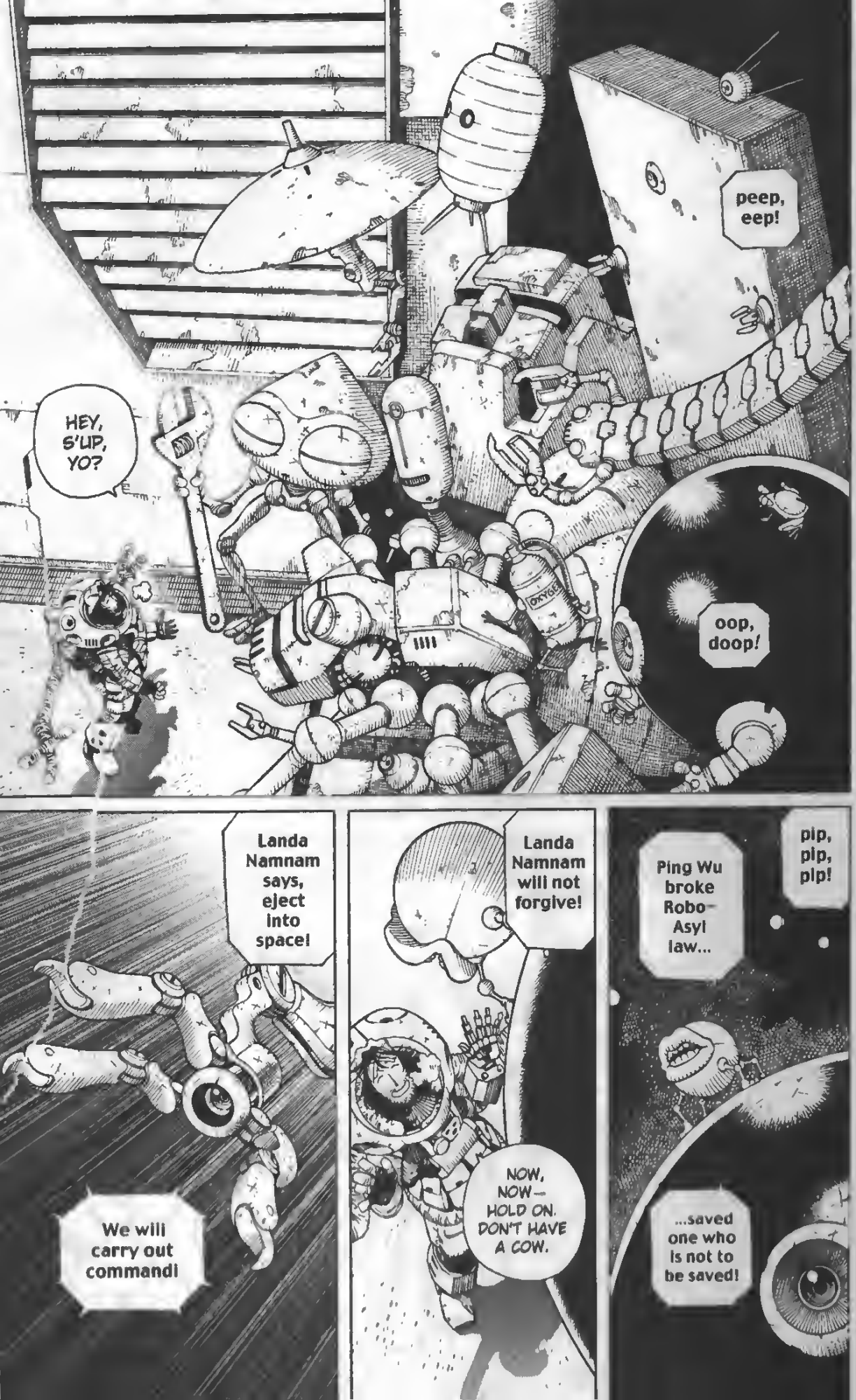
SPLUSH
bonk
WUH!
DON'T KID AROUND.
burb
heh heh
I SAW YOU GUYS IN ACTION DOWN THERE.
HACKING SURVEIL-LANCE CIRCUITS IS MY HOBBY.
I CAN TELL THIS IS REALLY VALUABLE!
I OWE YOU MY LIFE!
TO PART WITH THAT BOX WOULD BE A GREAT LOSS, BUT...
WOO-HOO!
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, IT'S YOURS!
WHO KNOWS WHAT NOVA'S HIDING IN THERE...
M-MASTER! WAAH!

HIRE ME THEN! I CAN BE A LOTTA HELP!
SO YOU WANNA GET YOUR FRIEND'S BRAIN BACK, RIGHT, ALITA?
'COURSE, I DON'T COME CHEAP... HEH!
I KNOW KETHERES INSIDE AND OUT—AND ALL OF TRINIDAD'S TRICKS!
DON'T TRY TA FOOL ME!
BROKE, HUH...?
I'D LIKE TO HIRE YOU...
...BUT I'M AFRAID WE'RE FLAT BROKE.
...
...
MASTER. DON'T TUUST HIM— HE'S SHADY!
...I'D TAKE THE DEVIL'S HELP RIGHT NOW.
THE DECK-MAN'S RIGHT, BUT...

THEN WHADDAYA CALL THESE?
klink
HMM?
ST-ST-STOP THAT!
NOVA'S BRAIN BIO-CHIPS— THE ONES JIM ROSCOE TOOK! HOW'D THEY GET INSIDE NO. 100?!
AH! TH-THOSE ARE—
...ON THE DNA ORGAN CONSOLE AND I THOUGHT THEY MIGHT COME IN USEFUL...
I-I DIDN'T MEAN TO HIDE THEM THEY GOT LEFT..
THEY'LL FETCH A GOOD PRICE THEN!
COULD BRING ME MILLIONS IF I MAKE THE RIGHT DEAL!
N-NOT THOSE BIO-CHIPS! TRUST ME...
...THEY'RE BAD NEWS!

TO HELL WITH MORALS AND LAWS. WHO CARES WHETHER STRANGERS DIE OR LIVE?!
IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!
IF YOU LIKE THEM, THEY'LL LIVE! IF NOT...
NO NEED TO PLAY GOODY-GOODY WITH ME. WE'RE BIRDS OF A FEATHER!
YOU'LL GO TO THE WALL FOR YOUR PALS...
...AND KILL ANYONE WHO IRRITATES YOU!
GOOD NEWS... BAD NEWS...
...YOU DON'T GIVE A CRAP WHAT THIS INFO WOULD DO TO THE WORLD, DO YOU?!
I... I CAN'T DENY IT...!
NGHH ...!
I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.
Snap
ONE NOW.
THE OTHER IF YOU SUCCEED.
YOU... YOU'RE RIGHT.
I JUST WANT LOU ALIVE AGAIN.

IT'S A DEAL!
klsp
?
HE FOUND OUT? ALREADY?
WELL, DUH!
BOSS, WE GOT TROUBLE!
LANDA NAMNAM IS PISSED.
AWW COME ON, GUYS!

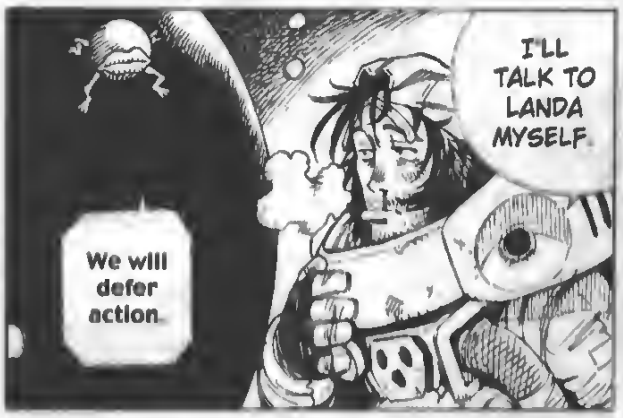

peep, eep!
HEY, S'UP, YO?
OXYGEN
oop, doop!
Landa Namnam says, eject into space!
We will carry out commandi
Landa Namnam will not forgive!
NOW, NOW— HOLD ON. DON'T HAVE A COW.
Ping Wu broke Robo-Asyl law...
pip, pip, pip!
...saved one who is not to be saved!

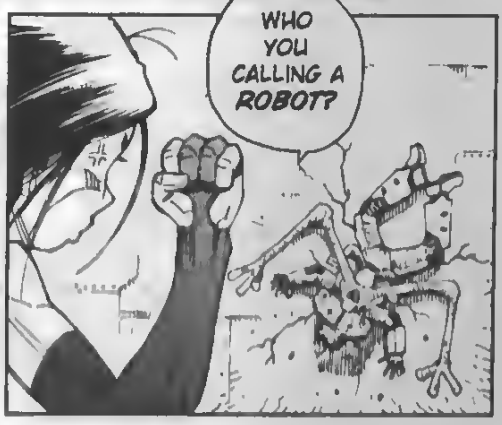
YEEK! MASTER!
gWmp
...YOU BLOCKHEADED ROBOT!
GET YOUR GRUBBY HANDS OFFA ME...
SKkssk

I DON'T NEED A WHOLE BODY TO DEAL WITH YOU!
Flesh
Borp wurp!
zreeee
ch-chk
I'LL TAKE 'YM ON!
WHICH ONE OF YOU IS LANDA NAMNAM?!

WHOAAA!
TIME OUT! CALM DOWN, ALL OF YOU!

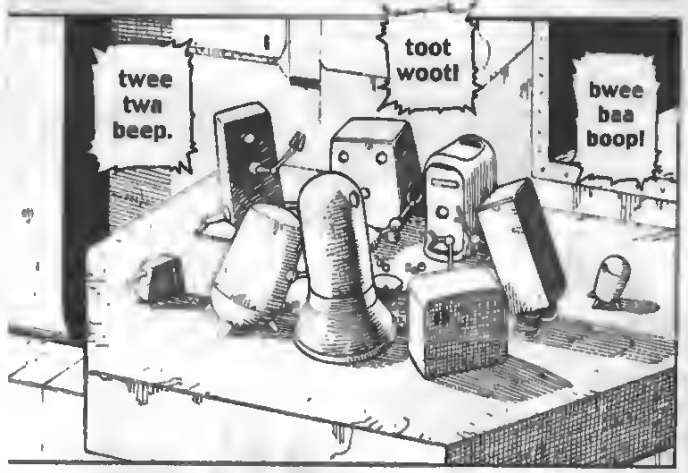
COOL IT! CHILL! WHAT'S THE POINT OF ROBOTS HURTING EACH OTHER?!
DON'T STOP ME— I'M IN THE FIGHTING MOOD NOW...!


We will defer action.
I'LL TALK TO LANDA MYSELF.


WHO YOU CALLING A ROBOT?

NO TWO ARE ALIKE!
THEY'RE DESCENDED FROM BOTS WHO WORKED THE BIG RECON JOB 190 YEARS AGO...
THAT'S WHAT MAKES 'EM SO CUTE.

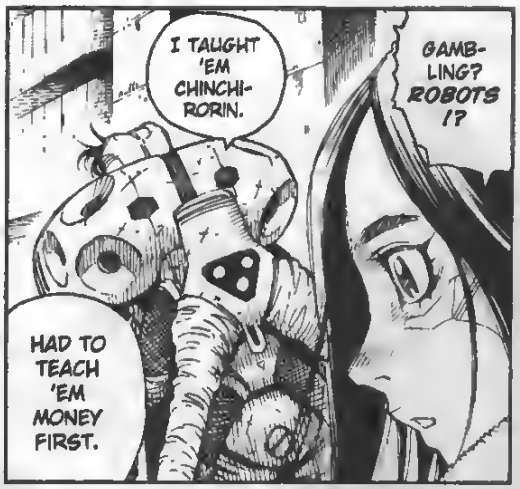
I DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE SO ATTACHED TO THEM!
urk
BUT A ROBOT IS *ONLY* A MACHINE ...

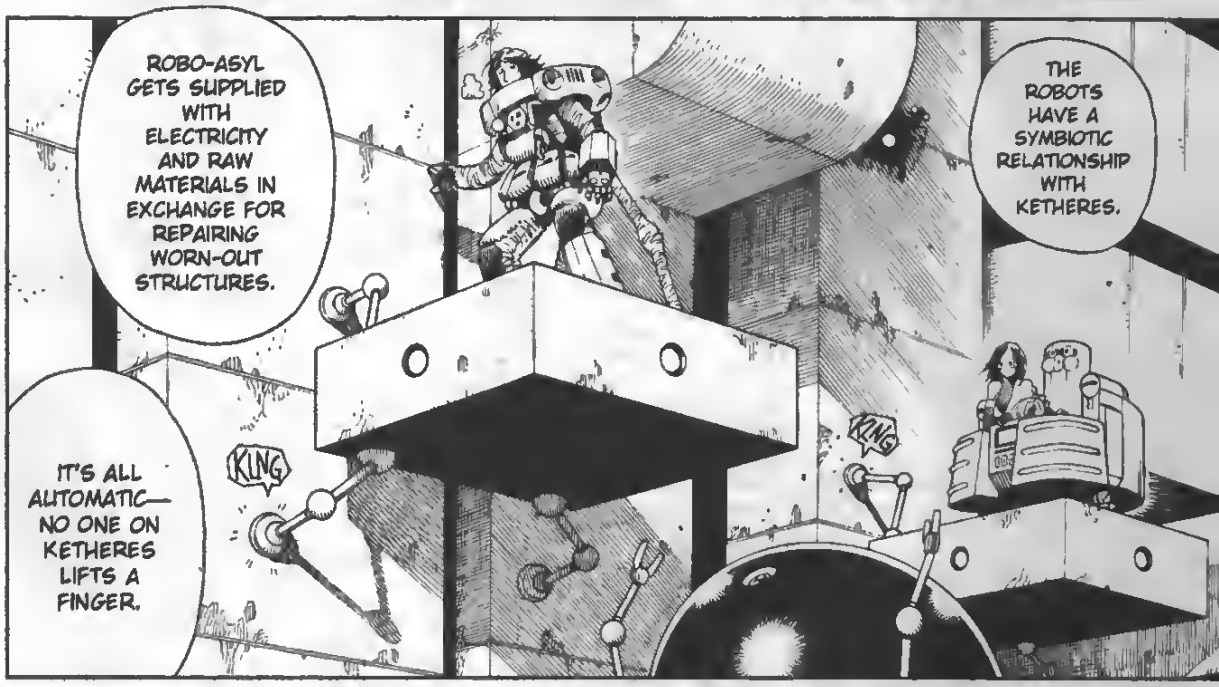

twee twa beep.
toot woot!
bwee baa boop!

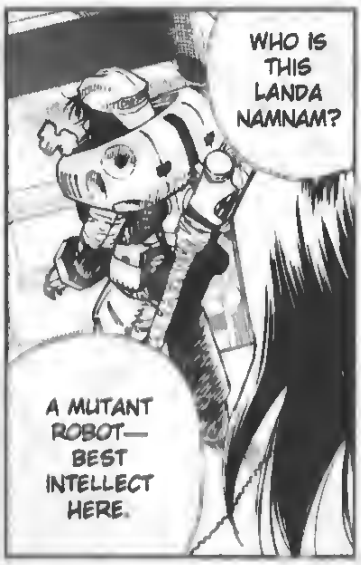
WHAT ARE THEY DOING!?
LOOKS LIKE A DICE GAME.

Inside the outer wall...
YOU GROW ATTACHED TO ROBOTS AFTER LIVING WITH 'EM FOR A CENTURY.

...
...
ha ha ha
THEY'VE SMARTENED UP A LOT—WON'T FALL FOR THE OLD TRICKS ANYMORE.
NOW THEY EVEN INVENT *NEW* WAYS TO CHEAT!


I TAUGHT 'EM CHINCHI-RORIN.
GAMB-LING? *ROBOTS* !?
HAD TO TEACH 'EM MONEY FIRST.


ROBO-ASYL GETS SUPPLIED WITH ELECTRICITY AND RAW MATERIALS IN EXCHANGE FOR REPAIRING WORN-OUT STRUCTURES.
THE ROBOTS HAVE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH KETHERES.
IT'S ALL AUTOMATIC—NO ONE ON KETHERES LIFTS A FINGER.
KING
KING


WHO IS THIS LANDA NAMNAM?
A MUTANT ROBOT—BEST INTELLECT HERE.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND...
...BUT LANDA'S AFRAID THEY'LL FIND OUT ABOUT US.

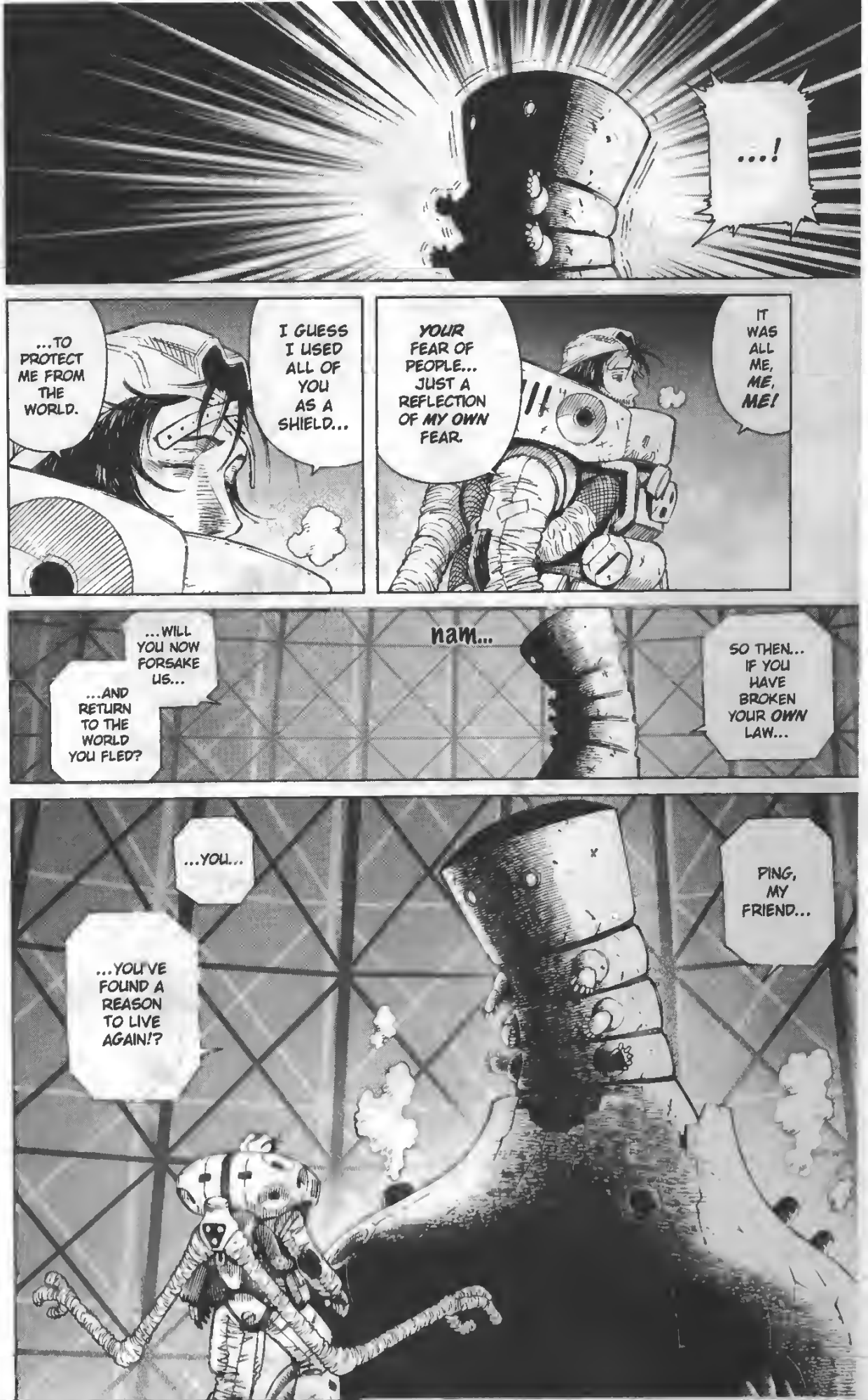
SORT OF LIKE TIPHARES AND THE SCRAP-YARD...

HE'S THE KING OF THE LAND OF ROBOTS...
...AND...
...HOW IT WAS WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED.
nam nam nam
PING WU, TRY TO RECALL...

IZZAT SO?
LONG TIME AGO. MUSTA FORGOT.
nam nam nam
THE YEAR WAS ES* 450. YOU HAD LOST YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR AIM IN LIFE.
YOU WERE BADLY DAMAGED, GROWN DESPONDENT TOWARD THE HUMAN WORLD...
ON ONE CONDITION! THAT HE ABIDE BY THE LAWS OF ROBO-ASYL AND NEVER INTERFERE WITH THE HUMAN WORLD AGAIN!
I RECEIVED A DIVINE MESSAGE FROM MELCHIZEDEK, THE GOD OF ROBOTS, AND I, LANDA NAMNAM, DEALT MERCY TOWARD PING WU, THE FORLORN HUMAN.
...EVEN THAT, PING WU?
HAVE YOU FORGOT-TEN...

*ES (Era Sputnik): Standard dating system used in space. The year the first artificial satellite Sputnik was launched into space (1957) marks the first year. Based on the period of Earth's revolution around the sun.

DON'T REWRITE HISTORY TO SUIT YOU!
YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG.
I WAS THE ONE WHO TAUGHT YOU HUMAN LANGUAGE!
ALLOW ME TO REMIND YOU – SINCE IT'S GOTTEN SO HAZY.
GAMBLING! CHEATING! MONEY! FAITH! ALL OF IT!
I CAME UP WITH THE NAMES LANDA NAMNAM AND ROBO-ASYL!
I MADE THE LAWS OF ROBO-ASYL ALL BY MYSELF!
I WAS THE ONE WHO SAID MELCHIZEDEK WAS THE GOD OF ROBOTS!


...!
I GUESS I USED ALL OF YOU AS A SHIELD...
...TO PROTECT ME FROM THE WORLD.
IT WAS ALL ME, ME, ME!
YOUR FEAR OF PEOPLE... JUST A REFLECTION OF MY OWN FEAR.
SO THEN... IF YOU HAVE BROKEN YOUR OWN LAW...
nam...
...WILL YOU NOW FORSAKE US...
...AND RETURN TO THE WORLD YOU FLED?
PING, MY FRIEND...
...YOU...
...YOU'VE FOUND A REASON TO LIVE AGAIN!?

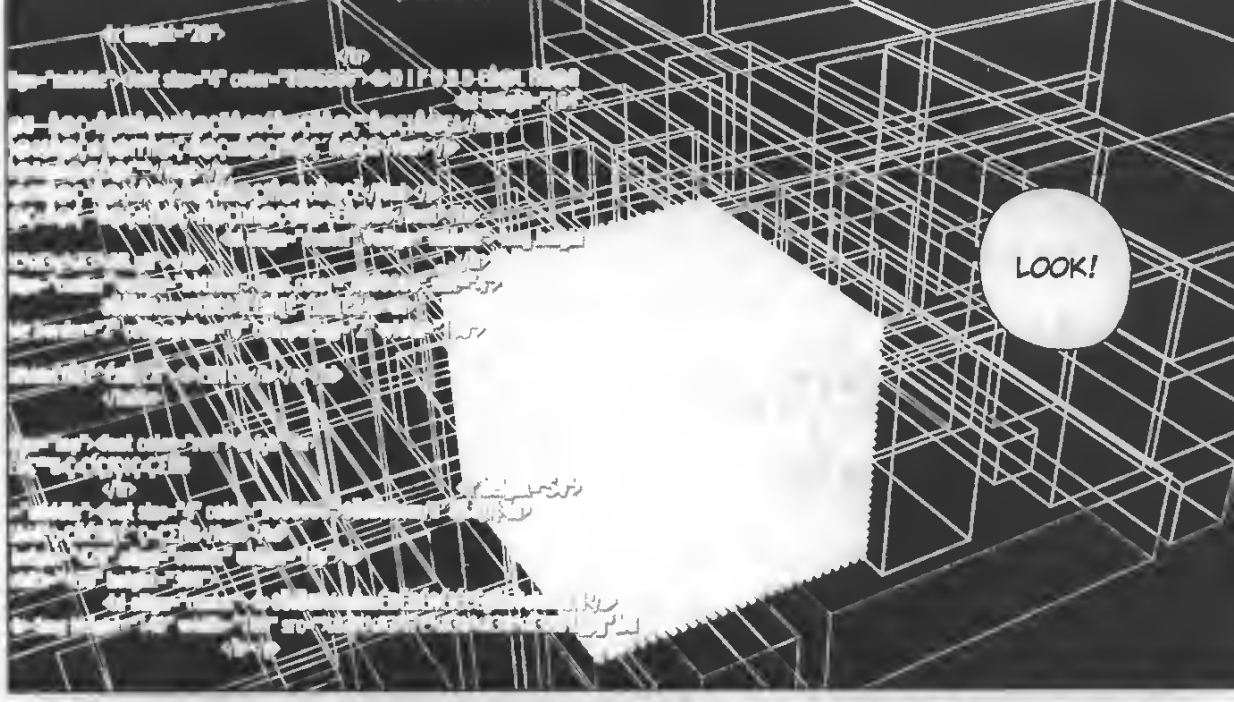
I'M JUST A SCOUNDREL... I CAN ONLY REPAY KINDNESS WITH WRONGS.
BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU. NEVER...
PING, MY FRIEND ...
...WILL YOU NO LONGER TEACH US THE NAMES OF THE STARS?
THANK YOU... FOR EVERY-THING
...
...

meer
I, LANDA NAMNAM, SHALL TURN MYSELF OFF FOR 24 HOURS.
GO WHERE YOU WILL IN THE MEANTIME!
wrrrp
wrrrp
YOU'RE SUCH A JERK...!

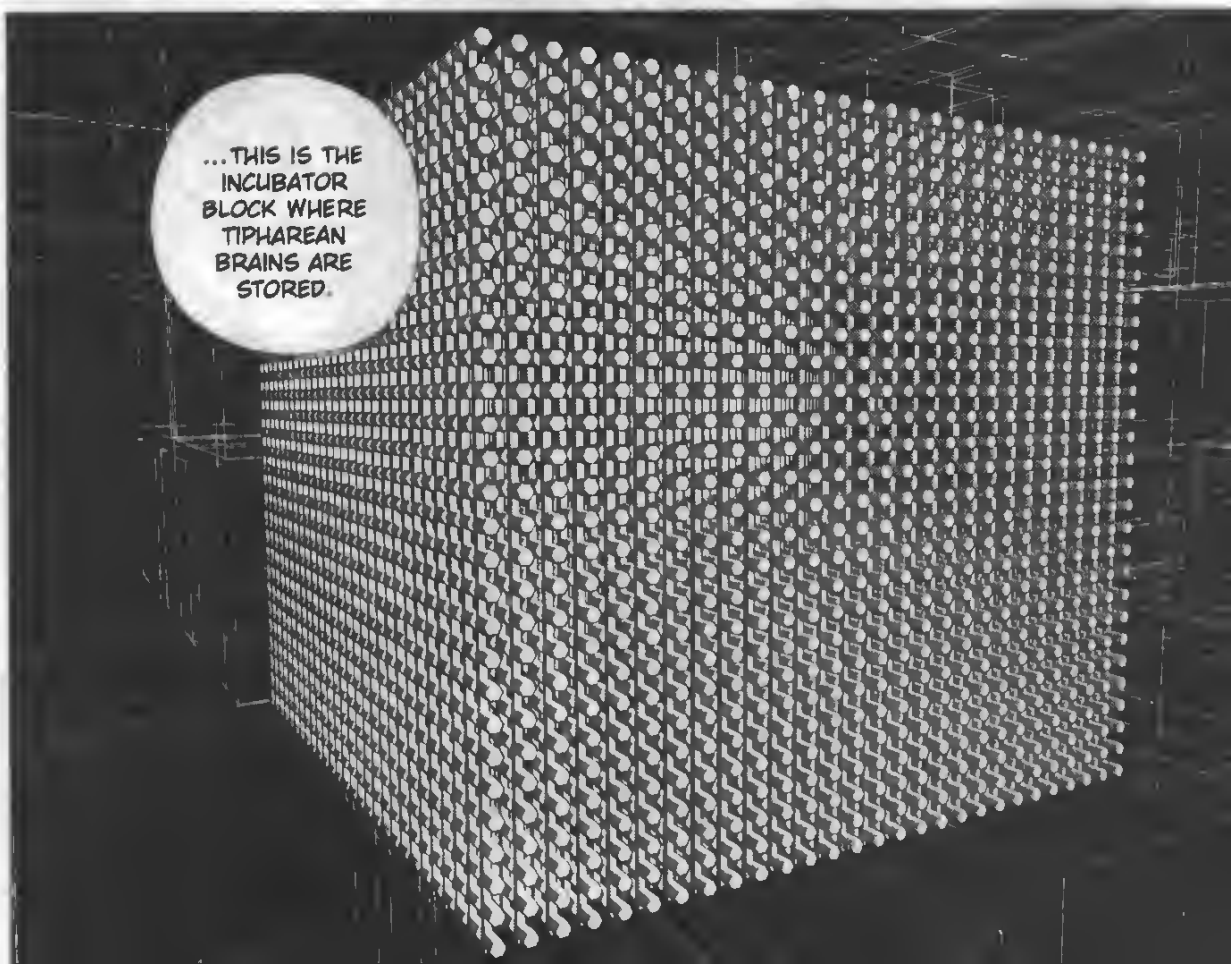
THE KING OF THE LAND OF ROBOTS, AND...
LANDA NAMNAM...
...MY FRIEND...
OF THAT, I'M CERTAIN.

PHASE 15

I'm Sure We'll Meet Again

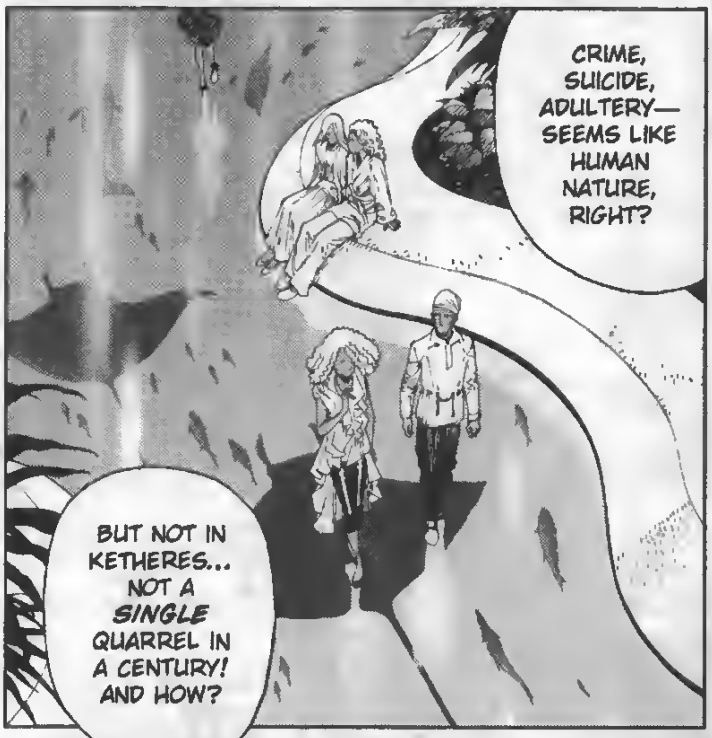

LOOK!

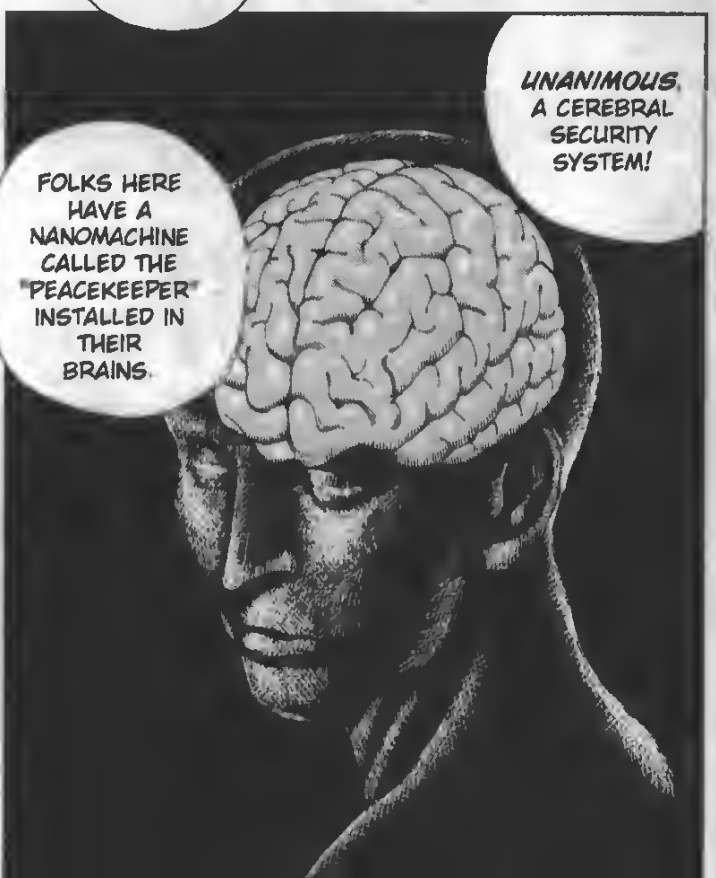
YOUR FRIEND MUST BE IN HERE SOMEWHERE...


...THIS IS THE INCUBATOR BLOCK WHERE TIPHAREAN BRAINS ARE STORED.

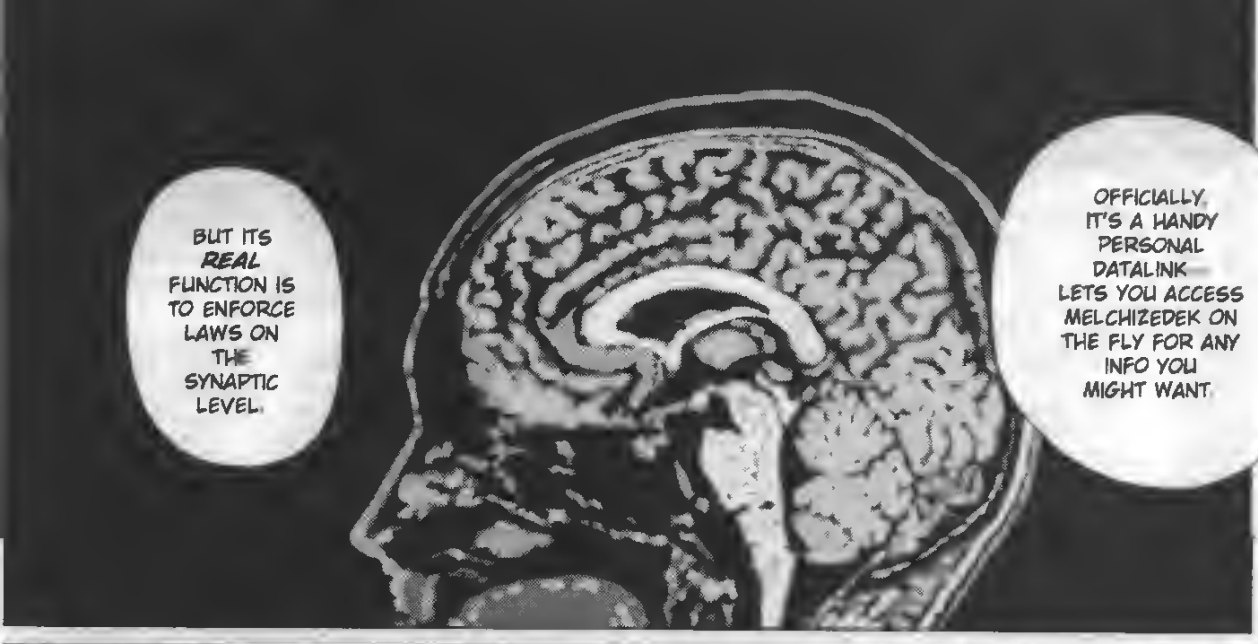
LOU...
HA, HA, HA!
THAT'S FUNNY?
...WHY WOULD THEY DO SUCH A HORRIBLE THING?!
B-BUT...
DO YOU HAFTA CRY EVERY TIME?
THEY COULD?! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
RIGHT AND WRONG— IT'S ALL IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER, ISN'T IT? THOSE BRAINS COULD BE THE HAPPIEST ONES IN THE WORLD, FOR ALL YOU KNOW!
TELL ME!
YOU UP FOR IT?
THAT'S A LONG, LONG STORY.

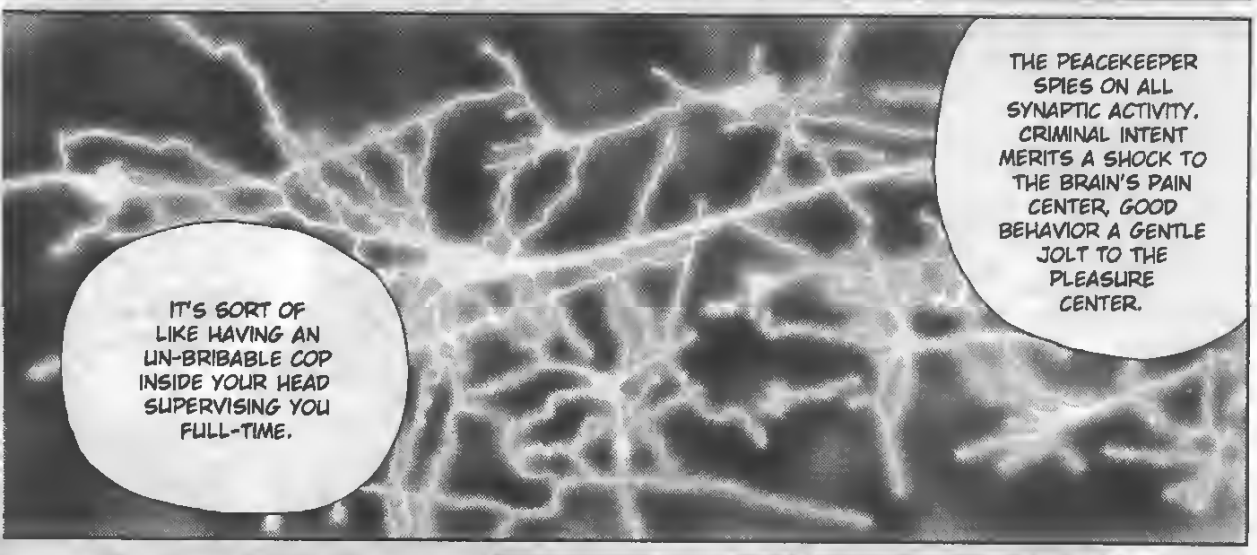
EVEN THE ROBOTS OF ROBO-ASYL GET INTO FIGHTS AND DECEIVE EACH OTHER.


CRIME, SUICIDE, ADULTERY— SEEMS LIKE HUMAN NATURE, RIGHT?
BUT NOT IN KETHERES... NOT A *SINGLE* QUARREL IN A CENTURY! AND HOW?


UNANIMOUS, A CEREBRAL SECURITY SYSTEM!
FOLKS HERE HAVE A NANOMACHINE CALLED THE "PEACEKEEPER" INSTALLED IN THEIR BRAINS.

THE INCUBATOR WAS CREATED TO AUGMENT A PUBLIC ORDER SYSTEM CALLED "UNANIMOUS."

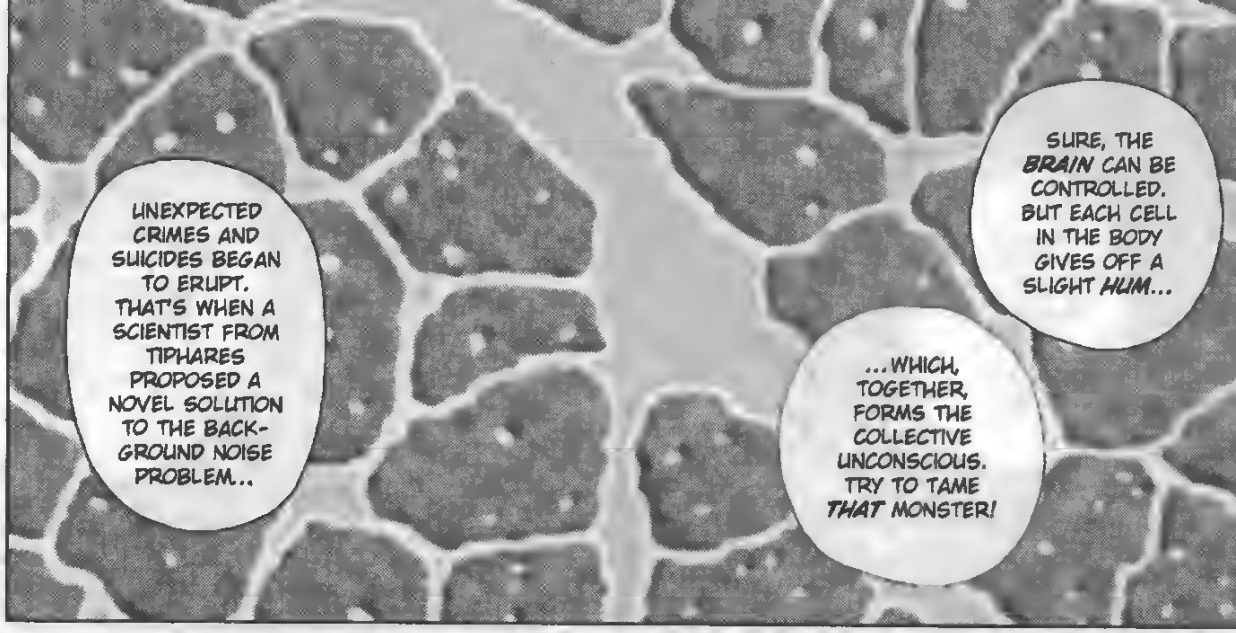

BUT ITS *REAL* FUNCTION IS TO ENFORCE LAWS ON THE SYNAPTIC LEVEL.
OFFICIALLY, IT'S A HANDY PERSONAL DATALINK— LETS YOU ACCESS MELCHIZEDEK ON THE FLY FOR ANY INFO YOU MIGHT WANT.

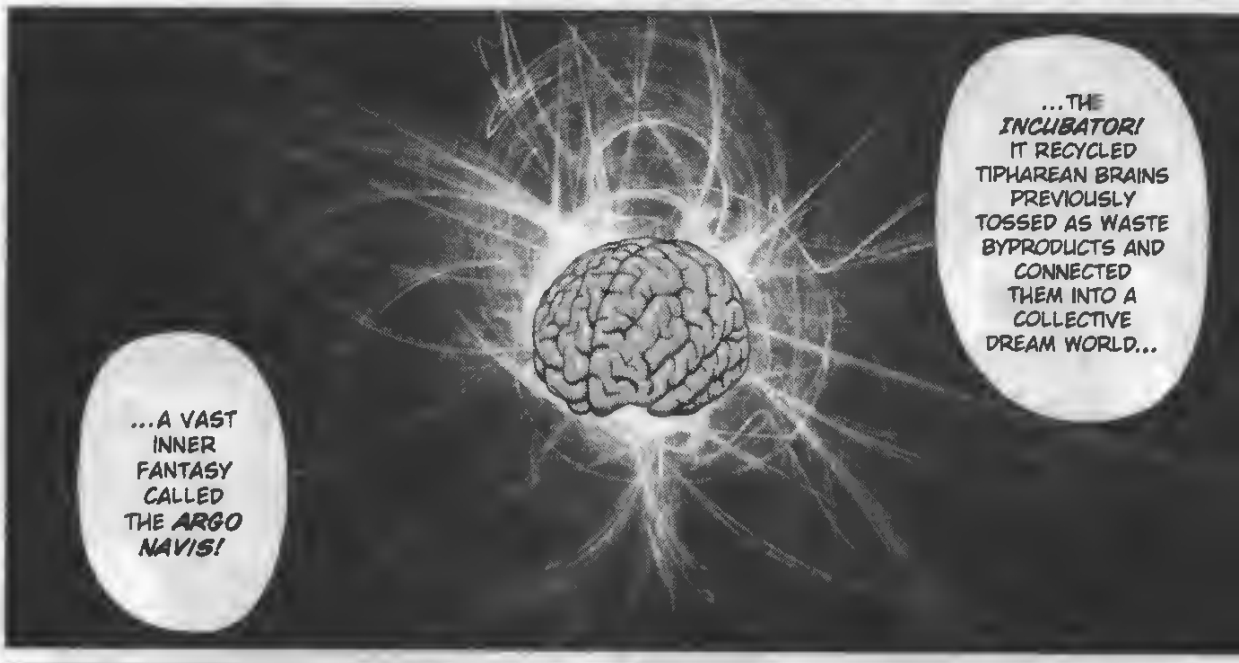

IT'S SORT OF LIKE HAVING AN UN-BRIBABLE COP INSIDE YOUR HEAD SUPERVISING YOU FULL-TIME.
THE PEACEKEEPER SPIES ON ALL SYNAPTIC ACTIVITY. CRIMINAL INTENT MERITS A SHOCK TO THE BRAIN'S PAIN CENTER, GOOD BEHAVIOR A GENTLE JOLT TO THE PLEASURE CENTER.

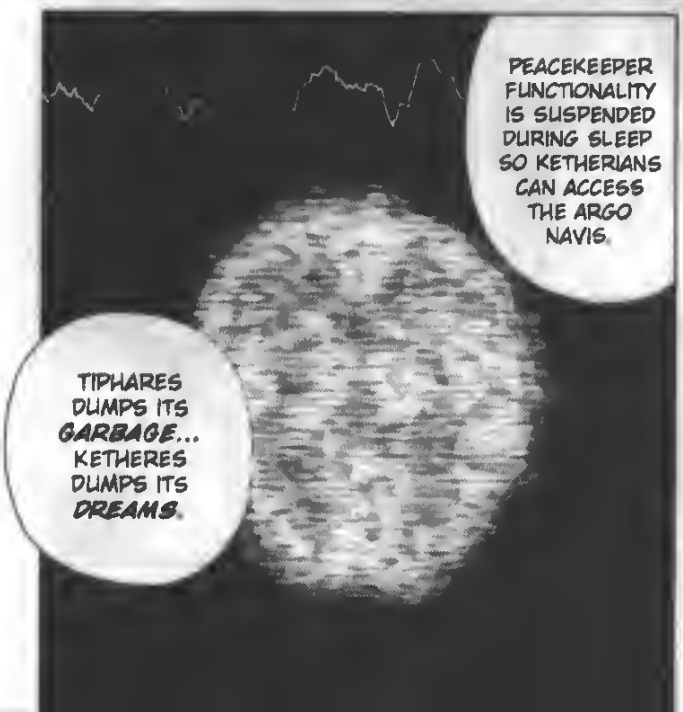
HOLD YOUR HORSES ...
...YOU SEE, UNANIMOUS *SEEMED* PERFECT—BUT THERE WAS ONE FATAL FLAW.

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS?
WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH LOU?

WITHIN A YEAR, YOU'RE PAVLOV'S DOG.
AND THE BEST PART? YOU NEVER REALIZE YOUR FREE WILL IS BEING CONTROLLED


UNEXPECTED CRIMES AND SUICIDES BEGAN TO ERUPT. THAT'S WHEN A SCIENTIST FROM TIPHARES PROPOSED A NOVEL SOLUTION TO THE BACK-GROUND NOISE PROBLEM...
SURE, THE *BRAIN* CAN BE CONTROLLED. BUT EACH CELL IN THE BODY GIVES OFF A SLIGHT *HUM*...
...WHICH, TOGETHER, FORMS THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS. TRY TO TAME *THAT* MONSTER!


...THE *INCUBATOR!* IT RECYCLED TIPHAREAN BRAINS PREVIOUSLY TOSSED AS WASTE BYPRODUCTS AND CONNECTED THEM INTO A COLLECTIVE DREAM WORLD...
...A VAST INNER FANTASY CALLED THE *ARGO NAVIS!*


PEACEKEEPER FUNCTIONALITY IS SUSPENDED DURING SLEEP SO KETHERIANS CAN ACCESS THE ARGO NAVIS.
TIPHARES DUMPS ITS *GARBAGE*... KETHERES DUMPS ITS *DREAMS*.

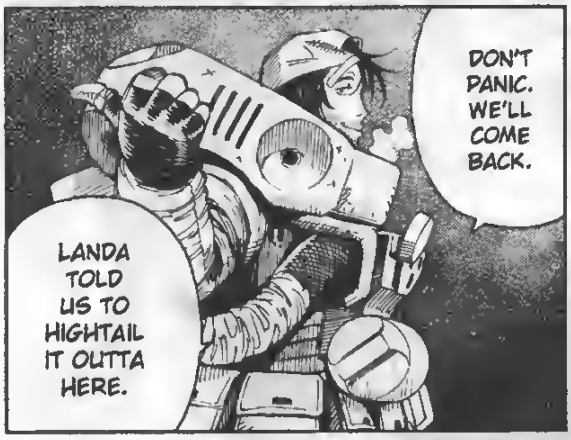
DOUBT THEY EVEN *KNOW* THEY'RE DISEM-BODIED.

LOU! SO YOU'RE... *DREAM-ING*...

I WANT TO KILL *EVERYONE* WHO DID THIS TO LOU!
GRR..
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
INCUBATOR BLOCK IS IN THE DEEPEST PART OF KETHERES, WITH THE HIGHEST SECURITY.
I WANT YOU TO FREE HER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
WHY THE RUSH?
HUMANITY'S ON ITS WAY OUT ANYHOW.
GOOD! NOW WE'RE *CLEAR.*
IT'S A TOUGH JOB— AND WE'RE DOING IT *MY* WAY!
I—I DON'T KNOW!
WHAT AM I PAYING *YOU* FOR, ANYWAY?
IF WE MAKE IT IN, WE'LL STILL HAVE TO *FIND* YOUR FRIEND.
WE'RE TALKIN' 20,000 UNLABELED BRAINS! AND *THEN* WHAT? WHERE WILL YOU RUN WITH THE SLIMY BLOB?

HOLD ON!
THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL!

FIRST, WE'LL HAVE TO ESCAPE FROM KETHERES!
WHAT ?!


DON'T PANIC. WE'LL COME BACK.
LANDA TOLD US TO HIGHTAIL IT OUTTA HERE.

I DON'T TRUST THIS GUY. WHAT IF HE GOES BACK ON HIS WORD AND RUNS OFF AFTER WE LEAVE KETHERES?!
RIGHT... LANDA, THE LAST PAL YOU BETRAYED!

DON'T TRUST ME?
FINE. I'LL LET YA IN ON PART OF MY PLAN.

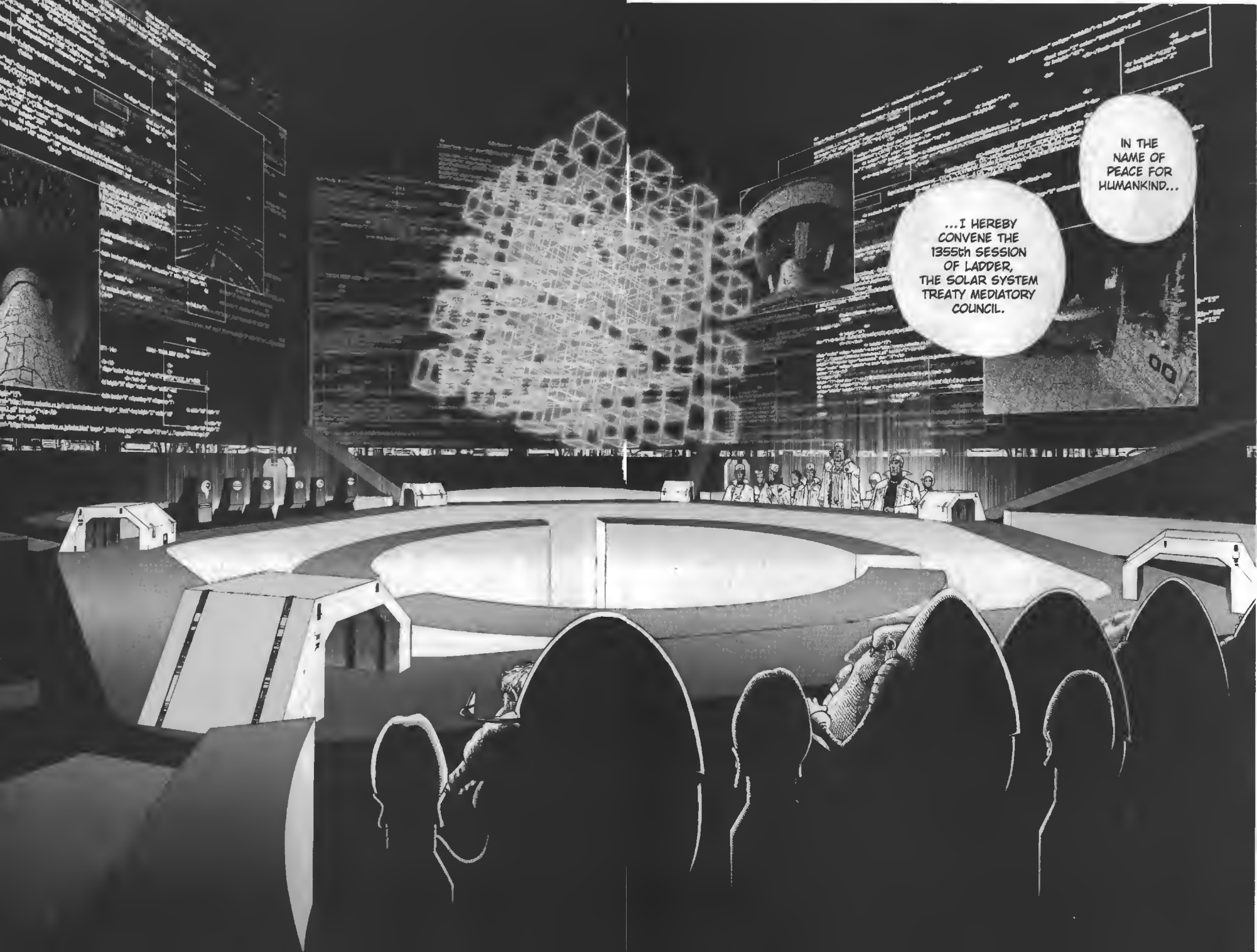
...
...
WHAT'S THAT WARY LOOK ABOUT?

Z.O.T
TOURNAMENT
EVERY TEN YEARS, KETHERES PUTS ON ITS BIGGEST EVENT— THE Z.O.T. TOURNAMENT.*
THREE MONTHS FROM NOW, WE MARCH IN AS AN OFFICIAL TEAM AND MAKE OFF WITH THE BRAIN DURING ALL THE HOOPLA.
MASTER, NO. 100 THINKS WE SHOULD GO!
YOU TOO...?
STEALING'S MY GAME. I'LL LEAVE FIGHTING TO YOU!
...
...
WHO'S ON THIS TEAM?
YOU GUYS, OF COURSE.
WANNA TAKE A PEEK...
...AND SEE HOW TRULY CRAPPY THIS WORLD IS?
BOSS, THE LADDER SESSION IS ABOUT TO START!
SEE? TRUST ME!
SAYS THE THIEF!
...
WE NEED TIME AND ELECTRICITY TO REPAIR YOUR BODY. WE CAN'T GET THOSE HERE!

*Z.O.T. Tournament: Short for "Zenith of Things," it began as an experiment to see how robots would fare against trained soldiers.

tmp
tmp

MM.
WE'VE TESTED IT FOR SAFETY, SIR.
THIS GENTLE-MAN HAS A GIFT FOR YOU.
plup
plipsh
krik
krck
Pop
CHOICE ICE CUBES FROM SATURN'S RINGS.
GOOD!
MM!
SKRNCH
KRAK
CRNCH
THEN THE MATTER WE DIS-CUSSED...
THANK YOU, I ACCEPT.

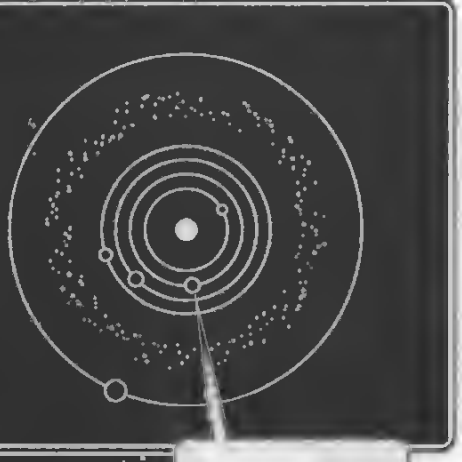

IN THE NAME OF PEACE FOR HUMANKIND...
...I HEREBY CONVENE THE 1355th SESSION OF LADDER, THE SOLAR SYSTEM TREATY MEDIATORY COUNCIL.

...MR. FOURNIER, WHOSE PREDECESSOR, MR. DUPUY PASSED AWAY FROM SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION
BEFORE WE BEGIN PLEASE ALLOW ME TO PRESENT...
LADDER Chairman Yajnik
...I HAVE BROUGHT A SPECIALTY OF MY COUNTRY— ROASTED INFANT MEAT HOMINID.**
Plap
Squee!
HOW DO YOU DO.
AS SWIFT* ONCE ADVISED TO "EAT CHILDREN"...
kack, kack!
Squik!
République Vénus Chief Delegate Fournier
A NONSENTIENT SPECIES GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOR HUMAN NUTRITION. AMINO ACIDS. VITAMINS. MINERALS— A PERFECT BALANCE SINCE THEY'RE SO SIMILAR TO US.
FRANKLY, I PREFER CHICKEN
INFANT M-MEAT HOMINID?!

*J. Swift (1667~1745): British satirist. From "A Modest Proposal." His works include **Gulliver's Travels.***

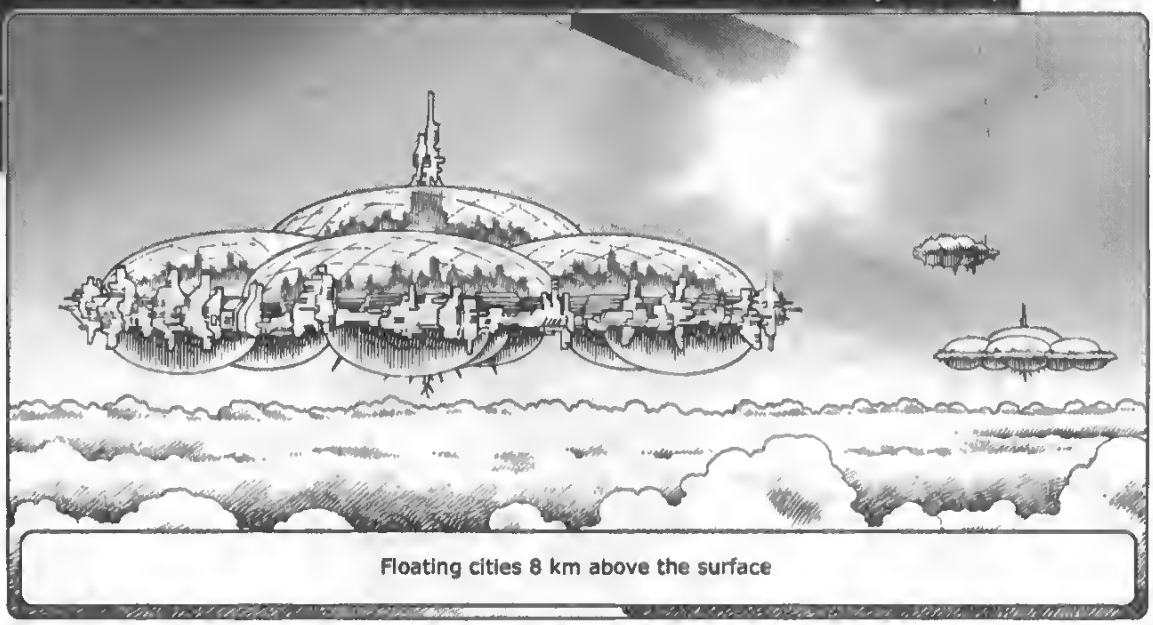
***Meat hominid:* Homo esculentus**

République Vénus



Venus: second planet from the sun
Radius at equator: 6052 km
Period of rotation: 243 days
Period of revolution: 224.7 days

ES 242: first Venusian space colony built in orbit.
ES 250: République Vénus, consisting of several colonial states, founded. Terraforming projects progress. Planet has mean surface temperature over 400°C, 90 mm Hg atmospheric pressure, and a sky covered by a dense cloud of sulfuric gas.
Construction of huge solar shield at the Lagrange point* cools atmosphere, with current surface temperatures of -50°C. Ownership of Enceladus,** the icy moon required for final stages of terraforming, in dispute with the Jupiter Union—thus terraforming only half finished.

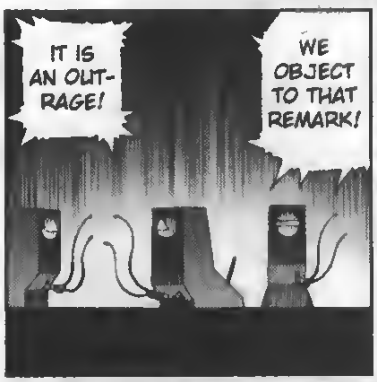


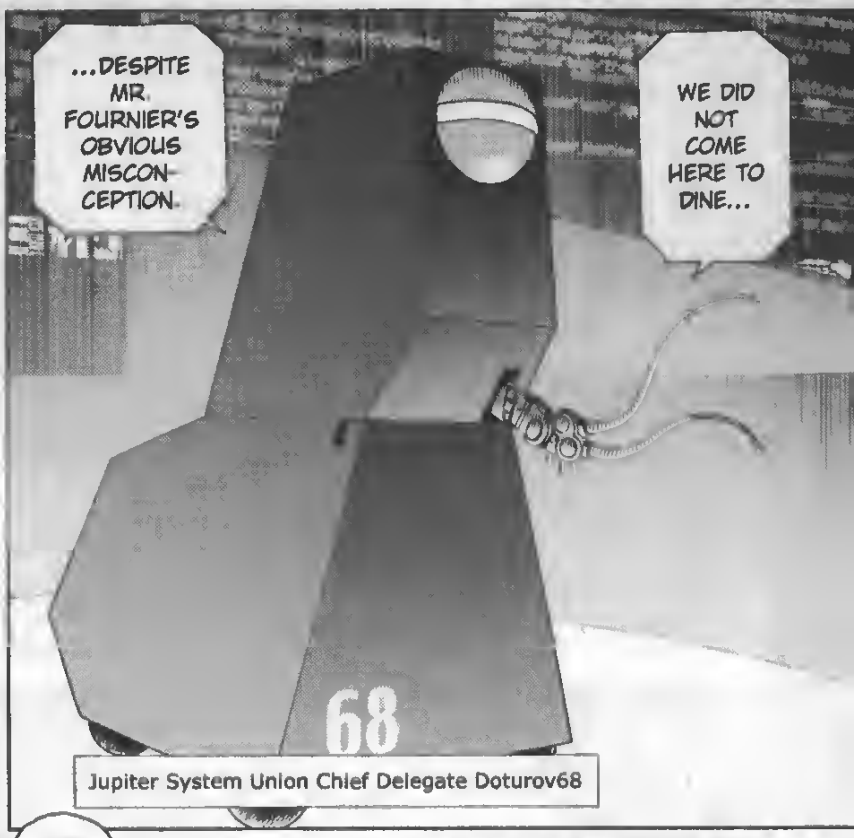
Floating cities 8 km above the surface

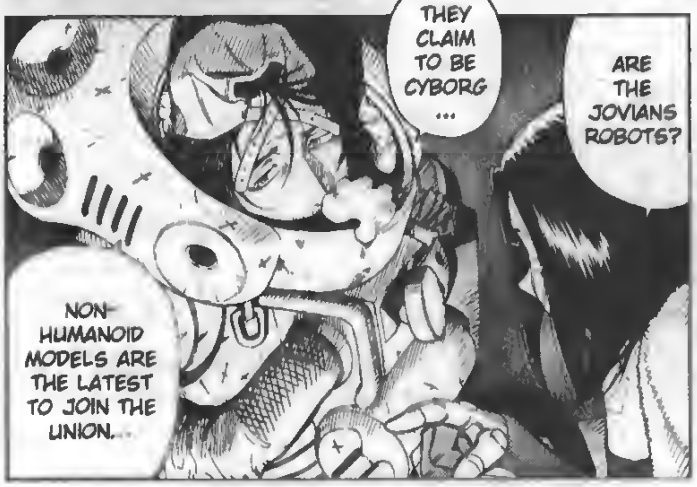
Lagrange points. points in the vicinity of two orbiting masses where their gravitational pulls cancel each other out, thus stabilizing the orbit of a third mass. Theorem proven by the French mathematician Lagrange (1736~1813).
**Enceladus: Saturn's satellite II. Radius at equator: 251 km. Discovered in 1789 by Herschel, and named after a giant of Greek mythology.*

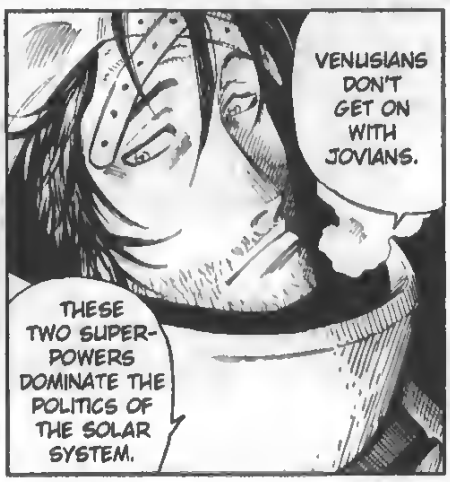
NO POISON, RADIATION, NANOMACHINES, OR HARMFUL PROTEINS DETECTED.
IT IS DEEMED SAFE.
SZZZZ

heh heh
APOLOGIES! I FORGOT JOVIANS HAVE NO TONGUES!
NEXT TIME, I SHALL PUT MOTOR OIL ON THE MENU.

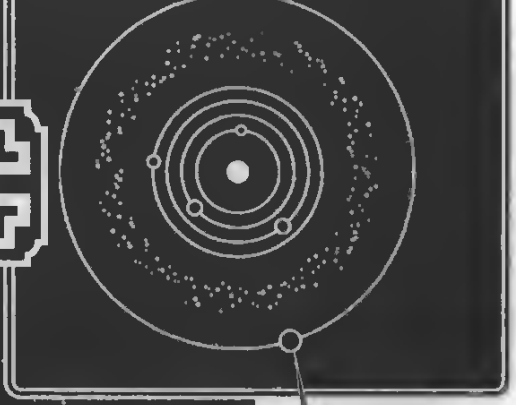

IT IS AN OUT-RAGE!
WE OBJECT TO THAT REMARK!

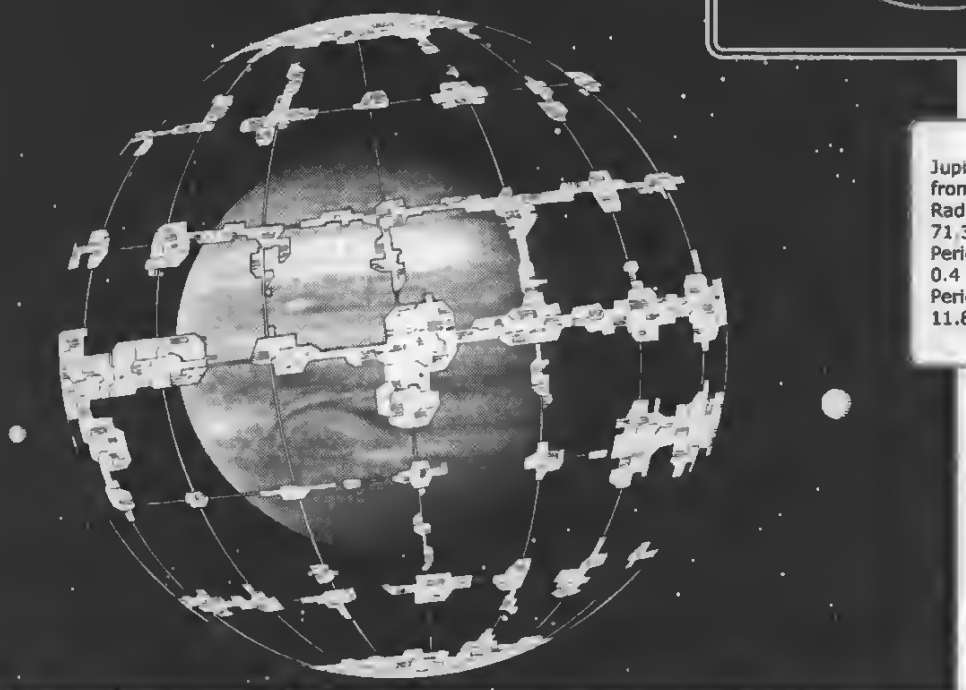

...DESPITE MR. FOURNIER'S OBVIOUS MISCON-CEPTION.
WE DID NOT COME HERE TO DINE...
68
Jupiter System Union Chief Delegate Doturov68


THEY CLAIM TO BE CYBORG ...
ARE THE JOVIANS ROBOTS?
NON-HUMANOID MODELS ARE THE LATEST TO JOIN THE UNION...


VENUSIANS DON'T GET ON WITH JOVIANS.
THESE TWO SUPER-POWERS DOMINATE THE POLITICS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

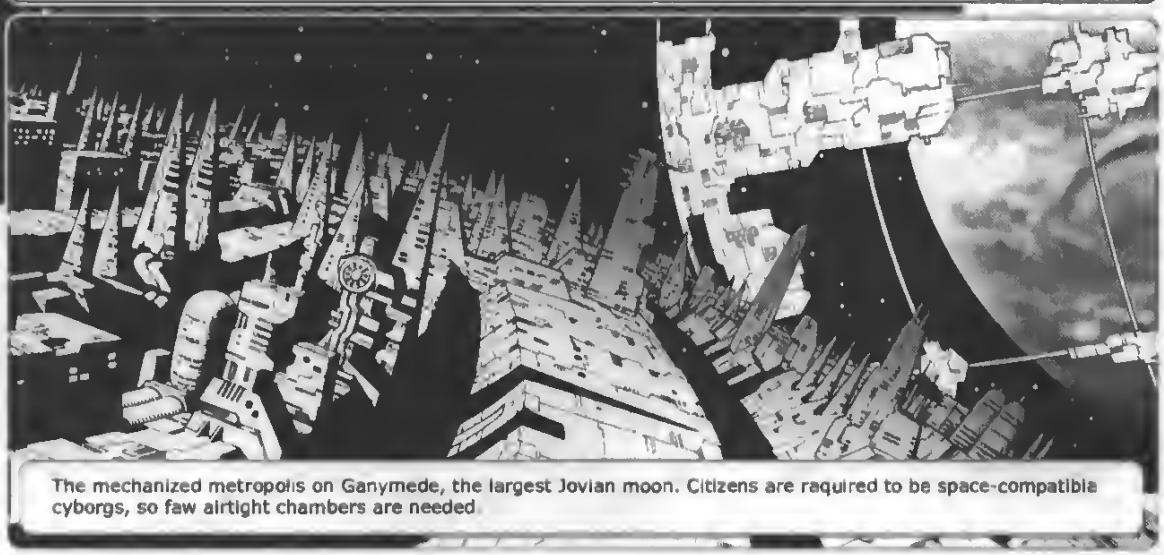
Jupiter System Union





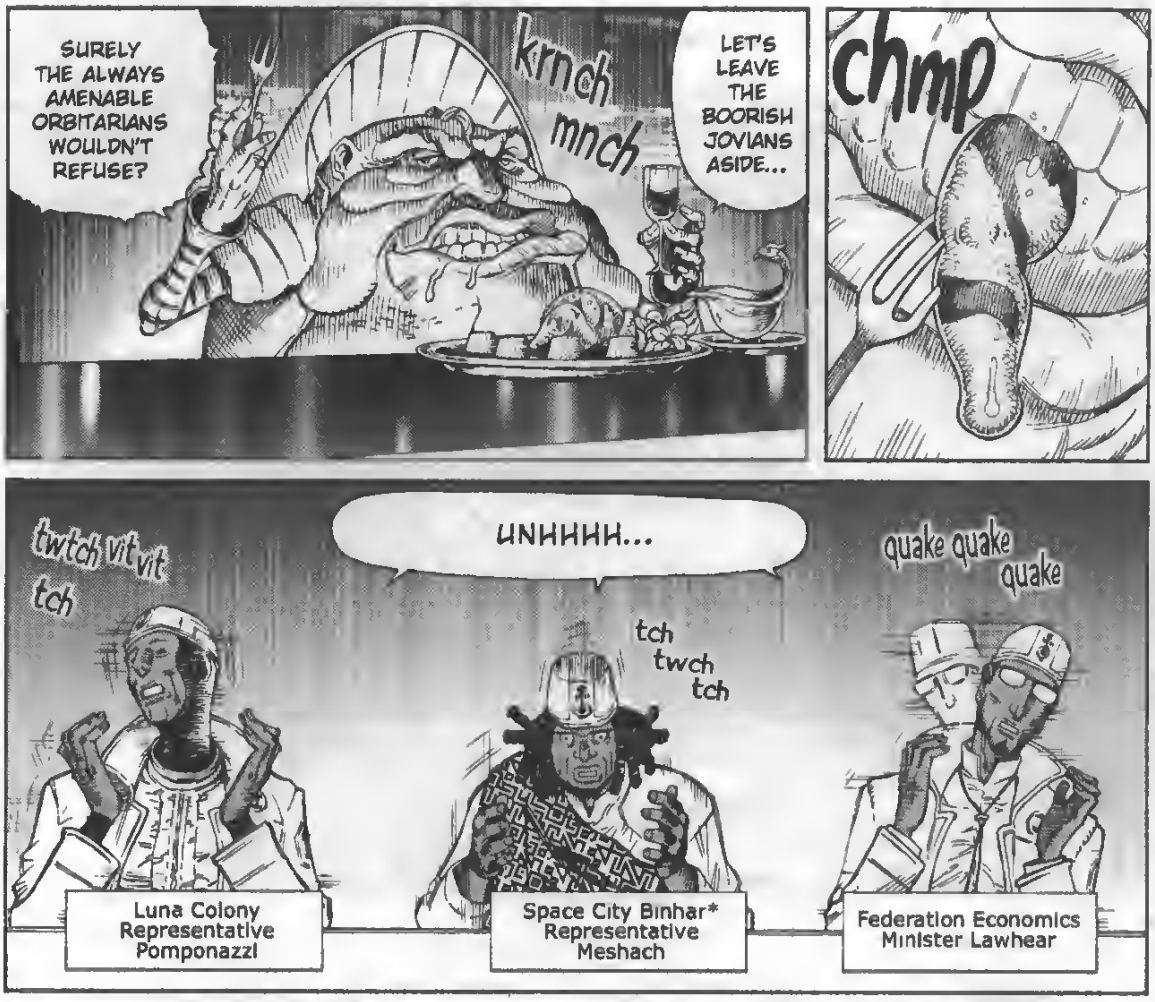
Jupiter: fifth planet from the sun
Radius at equator: 71,398 km
Period of rotation: 0.4 days
Period of revolution: 11.86 years

ES 263: The first colony is built on Ganymede, one of the Galilean satellites.*
ES 300: The Jupiter System Union declares independence, with colonies not only on the Galilean moons, but also on tha Trojan astaroid clouds along Jupiter's orbital path. It maintains a healthy economy due to the wealth of mineral resources on the asteroids, and tha abundance of the nuclear fusion fuel helium-3** in the Jovian atmosphare.
ES 316: Work begins on the "Toposphere Project," a giant shell to provide living space for Jupiter. Of the 16 original moons, all but three (Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto—each too urbanized to sacrifice) have been consumed to provide materials for the unfinished Toposphere. Jupiter and Venus both claim rights to Saturn's satallites and the asteroid belt to use as resources for their terraforming efforts.



The mechanized metropolis on Ganymede, the largest Jovian moon. Citizens are raquired to be space-compatibla cyborgs, so faw airtight chambers are needed

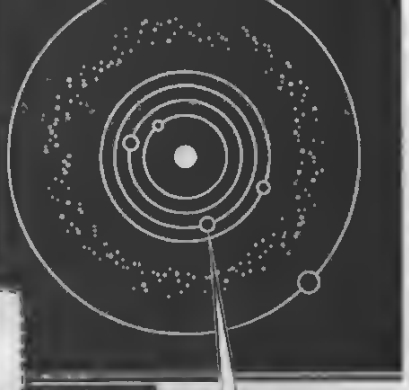
*Galilean satellites: four large moons discovered by Galileo in 1610: Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto.
**Helium-3: an isotope of helium. A deuterium-helium-3 plasma reaction operates at close to 100% efficiency, making it the ideal fuel for nuclear fusion.


SURELY THE ALWAYS AMENABLE ORBITARIANS WOULDN'T REFUSE?
krnch mnch
LET'S LEAVE THE BOORISH JOVIANS ASIDE...
chmp
twtch vit vit tch
UNHHHH...
tch twch tch
quake quake quake
Luna Colony Representative Pomponazzi
Space City Binhar* Representative Meshach
Federation Economics Minister Lawhear
BAD ENOUGH BEING CAUGHT BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS, BUT WHEN THEY GET OVERT HARASSMENT LIKE THIS, THE EARTH REPS DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE IT. TURNS THEM INTO BLITHERING IDIOTS.
FOR UNANIMOUS TO RUN SMOOTHLY, *EVERYONE* NEEDS TO HAVE THE PEACEKEEPER INSTALLED.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH *THEM?*
HEH, HEH! IT'S THAT DARN UNANIMOUS SYSTEM WORKING AGAINST THEM.

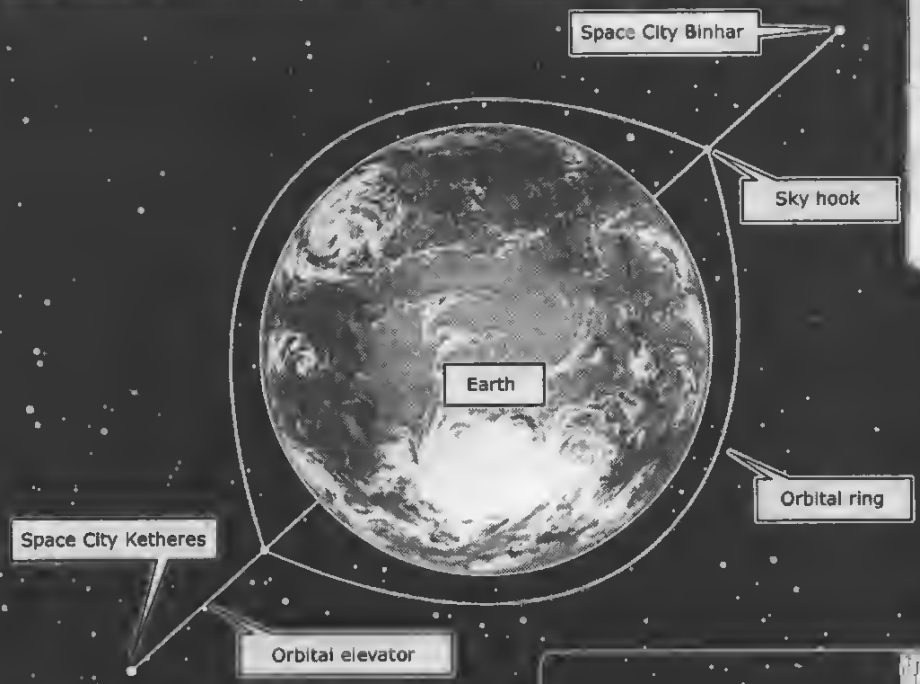
**Binhar: the Space City diametrically opposed to Ketheres pumps oxygen and seawater from the surface via the orbital elevator for export to the colonies. The corresponding surface gate city is Nezhar.*

Earth Orbitary Federation

The Orbitel Ring System
An orbital ring of two masses, wrapped in a tube and spinning in opposite directions, supports the diametrically opposed orbital elevators. The advantage of this structure is that the elevators can be constructed in places other than the equator, on any desired latitude and longitude.



Earth: third planet from the sun
Radius at equator: 6378 km
Period of rotation: 0.997 days
Period of revolution: 365.26 deys
Satellite: Lune
Radius at equetor: 1738 km
Period of revolution: 27.32 days



Earth: cradle of the human race.
ES 55: Geo Catastrophe—a giant meteor impact neer Japan almost wipes out the entire population of the planet. Seventy years later, Melchizedek, an A.I. that menaged to survive this extinction level event, implements the Rehabilitation Settlement Project, sending pioneers to other planets to dilute the danger of extinction.
ES 218: The orbitel ring system "Jacob's Ladder" is complete. The settlement project shows steady progress, but Earth is forced to alter its role after the colonies declare independence.
ES 301: Eerth and the luner colonies deciere the formation of the Eerth Orbitary Federation.
ES 387: LADDER, the Solar System Treaty Mediatory Council, is founded on Spece City Ketheres. Their unique history and political circumstences make the character of the Federation complex. Although weather patterns on the surfece have been stable for two centuries, open redevelopment and transportation are still restricted by treaties.

The **skyhook**, the link between the orbitel elevator and the orbital ring. The orbital ring system has undergone many repairs, end its roles and functions heve changed dramatically

These planetary terraforming concepts were based on ideas of the British scientist Paul Birch.—Kishiro

PSST!
SAY WHAT?
TAKE YOURS TO GO.
ALL RIGHT. GRR..
CHAIR-MAN, LET'S MOVE ON!
O-OF COURSE!

I'LL STICK WITH ICE CUBES, THANKS.
krsh
krnch

DOES HE HAVE A PEACE-KEEPER TOO?
MOST LIKELY.
NOT THAT IT DOES MUCH GOOD. THAT ONE'S A MYSTERY ...

KEEP YOUR EYE ON HIM!
THE SO-CALLED ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN— LADDER'S TOP DOG!

...THE UNION HAS NOTIFIED LADDER OF A LARGE-SCALE MILITARY ACTION PLAN INCLUDING A HUNT FOR JUVENILES
ASTEROID BELT
THE CENSUS RESULTS FOR THE FRONTIERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THE RATE OF METHUSELYZATION* IS COMPARATIVELY LOW, AND THE BIRTHRATE EXCEEDINGLY HIGH—ESPECIALLY IN THE MINOR COLONIES OF THE ASTEROID BELT.** AS A CONSEQUENCE...

WHEN DID WE AGREE TO THAT?!
I OBJECT!
WE DIDN'T ASK YOU.
THE UNION HOLDS ALL RIGHTS TO THE ASTEROID BELT...
...BUT WE MOST FIRMLY OPPOSE SUCH EXTREME MEASURES!
THE RATE OF NEW BIRTHS IS AN ISSUE...
LADDER SURVIVES ON TWO FEARS...
...A NEW GENERATION AND RUNAWAY NANO-TECHNOLOGY.
NO ONE AGES, SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR PROGENY... IN FACT, THEY'RE A BURDEN.
...IT'S ILLEGAL TO HAVE A KID.
WHY CALL OUT THE ARMY AGAINST CHILDREN?
WELL, AROUND HERE...

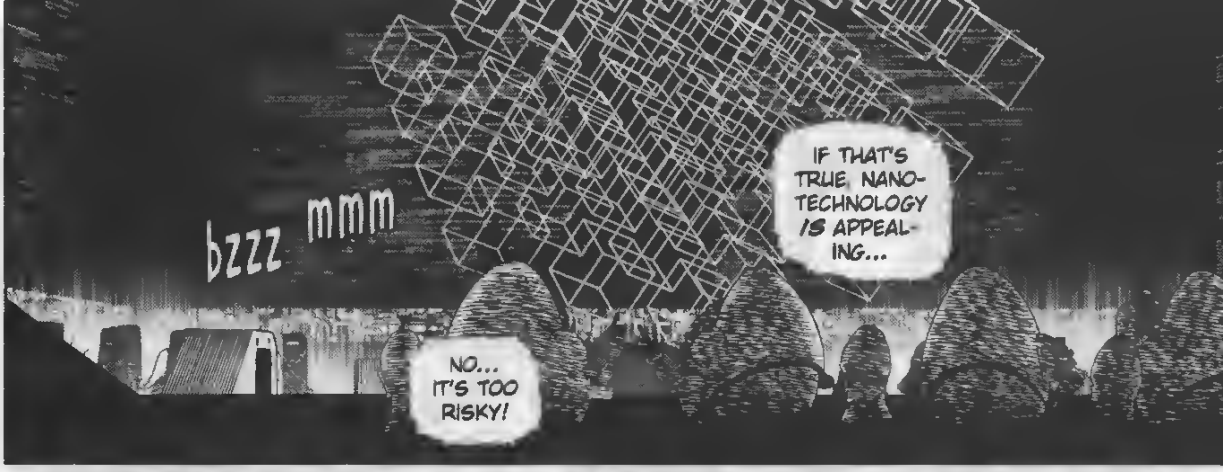
*Methuselyzation: halting the aging process by installing personal nanomachines in the body, thus making immortality a reality. Methuselah, a figure in the Bible's Book of Genesis, is purported to have lived 969 years.
**Asteroid belt: a donut-shaped region between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter in which most asteroids are found.

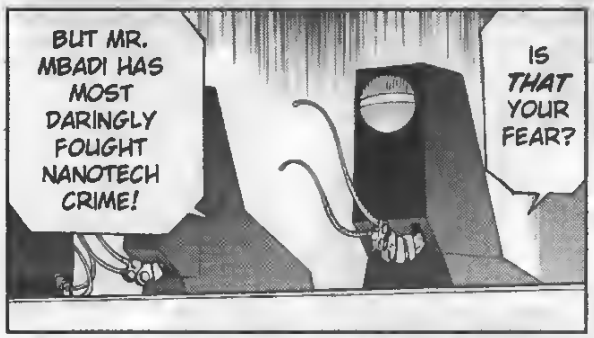
...AT THIS RATE, SCIENTISTS FEAR IT MAY LEAD TO A SUDDEN EXTINCTION OF THE HUMAN RACE!
NO ONE KNOWS THE CAUSE, BUT...
NEXT ON THE AGENDA— SPONTANEOUS HUMAN COMBUSTION!
...OF SUPER-LUMINAL RESEARCH— SPECIFICALLY, A FASTER THAN LIGHT TRANS-PORTER-REPLICATOR.
MOVING ON, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE PROS AND CONS...
PLEASE REFER TO YOUR MONITORS FOR DETAILS.
ELECTRON
MAGNETIC FIELD
BY JOINING AN E.P.R. COMMUNICATOR* WITH NANO-TECHNOLOGY, A TRANSPORTER OF INTERPLANETARY AND PERHAPS INTERGALACTIC PROPORTIONS COULD BE CREATED.

E.P.R. Communicator: Named after Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen, who advanced the EPR Thought Experiment as an argument to refute quantum mechanics, using relativity's concept that communication is impossible at speeds greater than that of light. Ironically, the experiment was verified by experimental violation of Bell's Inequalities, and EPR became the name for a super-luminal communicator that uses electron spin.

TRUE.
AND YET...
AND THE ORIGINAL OBJECT REMAINS IN PLACE! WITH HUMANS...
...THIS WOULD CAUSE THE SO-CALLED "ALIAS PROBLEM."*
OUT OF THE QUESTION! THIS VIOLATES THE BAN ON NANOTECH RESEARCH!
SCAN AN OBJECT, TRANSMIT THE DATA, ASSEMBLE VIA NANO-MACHINE.
ALL THIS CAN BE OURS...
...WITH THE THEORY OF KARMATRON DYNAMICS!
IT WOULD RENDER THE 200-YEAR-OLD BAN ON NANOTECH RESEARCH AND GENERATIONAL GENOCIDE *MEANING-LESS.*
...WHAT IF THERE WAS A THEORY THAT ALLOWED *COMPLETE* CONTROL OF NANOMA-CHINES?

**Alias Problem: when two people with the same memories, personalities, and bodies exist at the same time in the same society.*





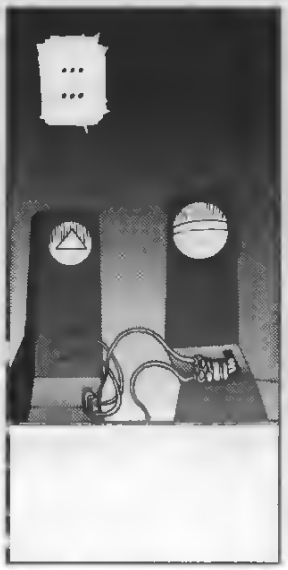
HE IS THE HERO WHO CHASED DR. VARES— THE MOST HEINOUS VILLAIN IN HISTORY— TO HIS DEFEAT ON PLUTO!
SURELY EVERYONE KNOWS OF HIS COURAGEOUS EXPLOITS— THEY'VE BEEN MADE INTO COUNTLESS NOVELS AND DRAMAS!

*Gray goo. jargon for a disaster brought about by self-replicating nanomachines running amuck.

IF YOU WOULD ALLOW ME THIRTY YEARS...

...AND THIS IS THE MOST URGENT.
THE LAST TOPIC ON THE AGENDA...

OLYMPUS SPACEPORT ON MARS... AND ITS CAPTURE!


...
...

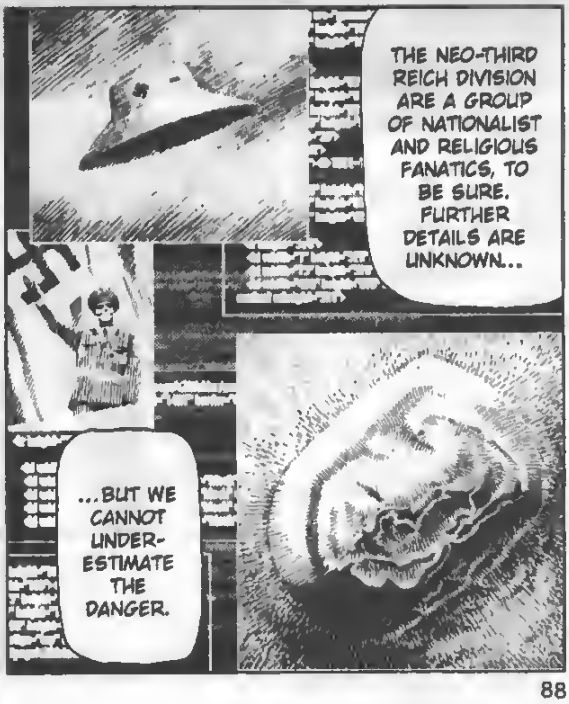
HMM...

ah!
MARS...

THIS PORT IS OPERATED BY OLYMPUS PAYLINE CO., WHICH IS FINANCED BY LADDER. WE CANNOT IGNORE THIS SITUATION.
A MONTH AGO, OLYMPUS, THE ONLY PUBLIC SPACEPORT, WAS OCCUPIED BY GUERILLAS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS THE NEO-THIRD REICH DIVISION.
REC

WHAT ARE NEO-NAZIS DOING ON MARS?

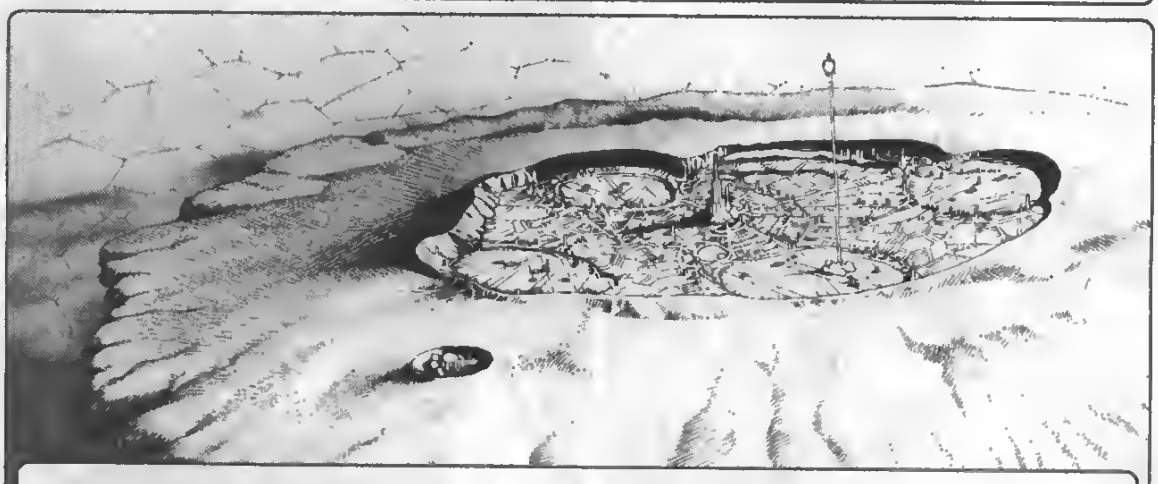
ha ha ha
That's a classic.
LEGEND HAS IT THAT NAZI GERMANY AND THE JAPANESE EMPIRE BUILT THEIR FIRST COLONY ON MARS PRE-ES...


THE NEO-THIRD REICH DIVISION ARE A GROUP OF NATIONALIST AND RELIGIOUS FANATICS, TO BE SURE. FURTHER DETAILS ARE UNKNOWN...
...BUT WE CANNOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE DANGER.

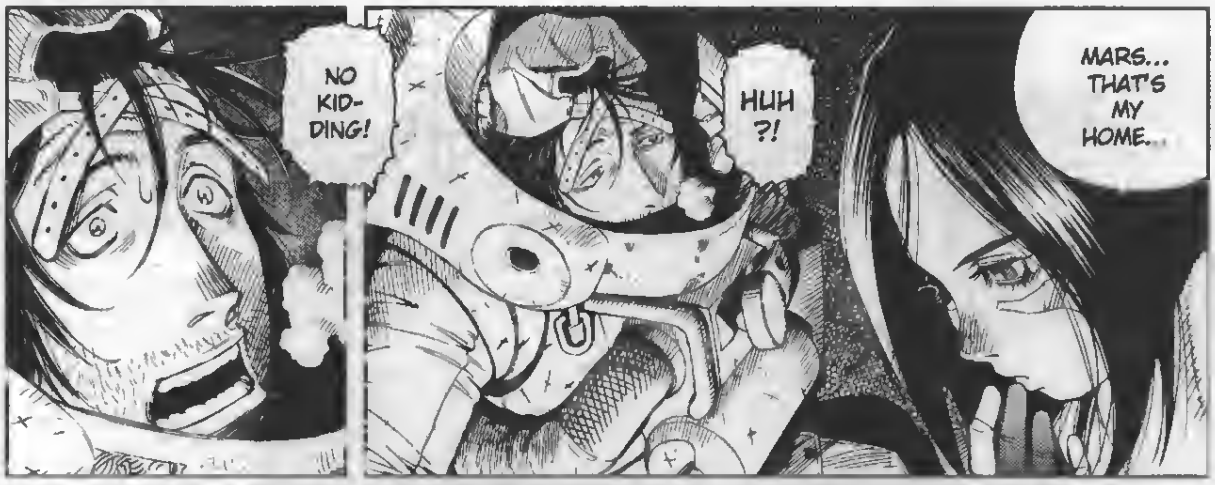
Mars

Mars: fourth planet from the sun
Radius at equator: 3397 km
Period of rotation: 1.026 days
Period of revolution: 686.98 days

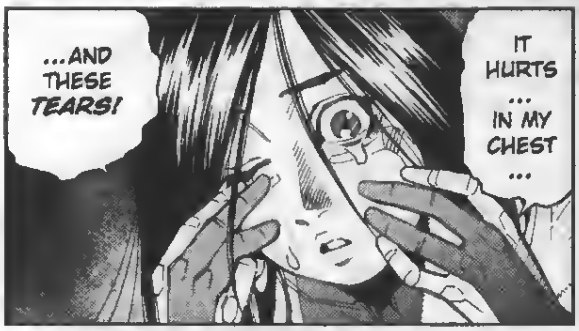
A planet with the oldest history of settlers. The first emigration to Mars occurred by ES 53. After the Geo Catastrophe, construction of a full-scale colony began in ES 235, but ease of emigration and a comparatively hospitable environment led to oversettling—and a prolonged civil war. The planet remains divided to this day. Making space access difficult, more than 80% of the surface is covered by a canopy that is self-repaired by nanomachines. Squabbles erupt over control of orbiting mirror satellites that supplament the insufficient sunlight, but the atmosphere is breathable.
Four roughly divided groups currently vy for supremacy:
MRH (Mars Republik Heer): Mars Republic Army. funded by République Vénus to unify Mars and make it join the République.
**MFB (Mars Front der Befreien): funded by the Jupiter Union to unify Mars and make it join the Union.
Mars Kingdom Parliament: LADDER-spearheaded attempt at constitutional monarchy.
Neo Third Reich Division: an emergent group calling itself the "Last Battalion" that aims to unify Mars, resurrect the Third Reich, and conquer the entire galaxy.

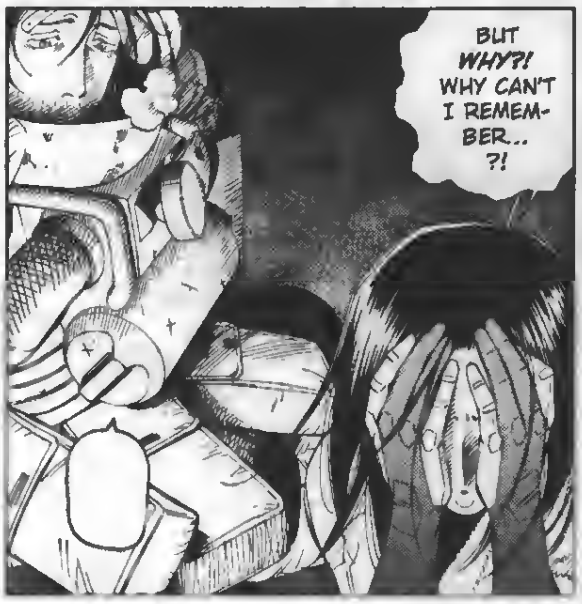


Olympus Spaceport, built in a caldera on Olympus Mons, largest mountain on Mars.


NO KID-DING!
HUH ?!
MARS... THAT'S MY HOME...

WAR? THERE'S ALWAYS BEEN WAR ON MARS.
I CAN ONLY RECALL BITS AND PIECES...
...LIKE WAR... THERE WAS A WAR...


...AND THESE TEARS!
IT HURTS ... IN MY CHEST ...


BUT WHY?! WHY CAN'T I REMEM-BER... ?!

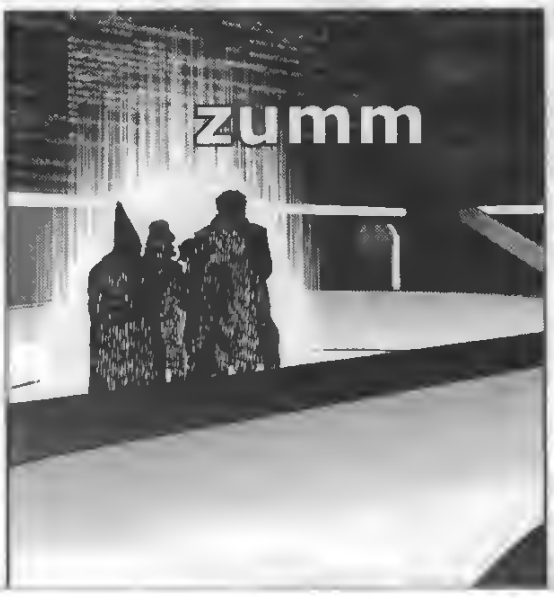
NO... A BIG WAR... BIG ENOUGH...
...TO DESTROY ENTIRE PLANETS!

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE TERRA-FORMING WARS?
THAT WAS OVER 200 YEARS AGO.
THERE WAS THIS HACKER, AT THE END OF THE GREAT WAR—STOLE SOME METHUSELAH TECH FROM A LAB ON VENUS...
...SPREAD IT ALL OVER THE NET! LADDER WAS SET UP AS A RESULT, AND THEN A CEASE-FIRE...
HOW OLD AM I AGAIN?
200 YEARS?!
SHE MUST BE ALIVE!
TH-THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!
AND IF I'M STILL ALIVE...
...ERICA COULD BE OUT THERE, TOO...

NOW WE SEE YOUR FANGS!
WE MUSTN'T DAMAGE THE PORT! SEND AID TO THE LOCAL FORCES— PUT THEM TO USE!

SEND THE UNION'S SPACE FLEET TO BOMB THEM!

...OF INVITING A SPECIAL GUEST TO WEIGH IN ON THIS MATTER.
I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY...


zumm

COME IN!

THE NEW QUEEN LIMEIRA...
...OF THE MARS KINGDOM PARLIAMENT!

PHASE 16
I Will Put This World Right

FINE! THE TREATY OF 387 SANCTIONED THE KINGDOM PARLIAMENT!
THE UNION *DEMANDS* AN EXPLANATION!
WE *OBJECT* TO THIS OUTRAGE!
OH, DEAR ME!
I'VE CAUSED *QUITE* THE COMMOTION!
Mars Kingdom Parliament's Queen Limeira

...TO FIGHT A WAR BY PROXY ON OUR SOIL.
EACH COUNTRY SPONSORS ONE OF OUR ENEMIES...
Minister Jo Hann
WHATEVER IS THE PROBLEM, JO?
WELL, MA'AM...
NO, WE ARE HERE SOLELY AT MR. MBADI'S DISCRETION.
I ASSUMED OUR PRESENCE WAS AGREED UPON BY ALL.
SO THEY'D LIKE *THEIR* SIDES REPRE-SENTED AS WELL.
WE DID NOT COME...
...MAY BE HERE...
...IN THIS *VERY ROOM!*
...TO TAKE REVENGE OR TO WAGE WAR, GENERAL.
A PITY I HAVE NO GUN.
THE MAN WHO KILLED OUR KING...
General Yazuiji

...SAY "HI."
KÖNIG...
A TOY BEAR?!
WHAT?
THAT'S GERMAN FOR "KING"...
KÖNIG ?!
How do you do...
Hello, all!

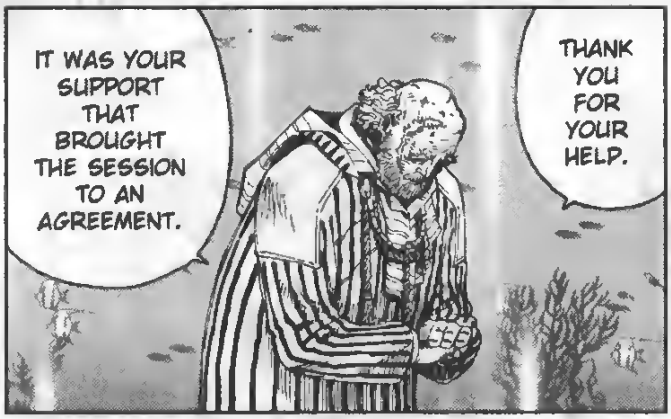
I-IT CAN'T BE!
bzz
mzz
URK!
beep boop
THAT'S A NEW TWIST!
CONTACT THE LIBER-ATION FRONT AT ONCE!
PSSt
DID KING REMSEN ...
...HIDE HIS BRAIN IN A TEDDY BEAR TO ESCAPE ASSAS-SINATION?!
AHEM.
ENOUGH VENTRILO-QUISM.
LET'S MOVE ON...
fump
♡ WELL DONE!
pit pat

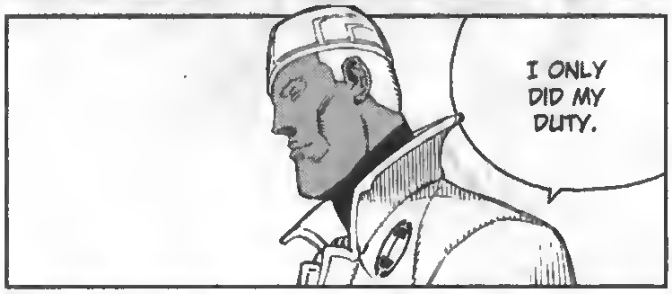
LADDER WILL *OWE* US IF WE RECAPTURE THE SPACEPORT.
...BUT LET'S BE GLAD FOR EVEN THREE MONTHS OF AID.

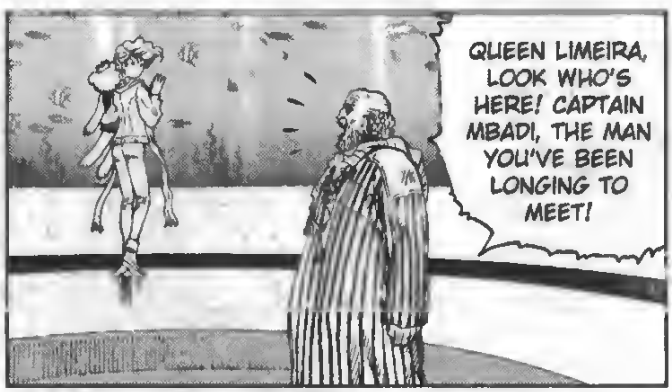
BACK TO THE BATTLE-FIELD!
I DON'T FEEL AT HOME HERE...
Queen's Escort Zazie

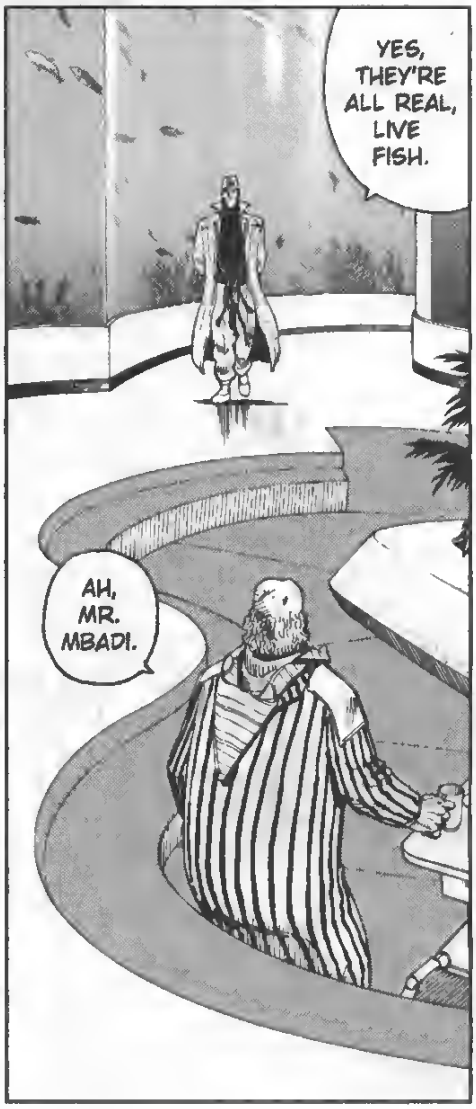
L4
EARTH
L1
LUNA
L3
L2
L5
ZAZIE, WE HAVE ONE MORE THING TO DO.
LEVIATHAN I IS AT POINT L2*— WE MUST RENDEZVOUS THERE WITH THE NEW ORDER** SUPPORT CORPS.

I WASN'T SURE HOW IT WOULD TURN OUT FOR A WHILE THERE...









*Point L2: one of the five Lagrange points in the lunar system.
**NEW ORDER: LADDER's interplanetary keepers of the peace, under the command of Aga Mbadi.

DO YOU LIKE THE AQUARIUM?
OH, MY.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE AN AUDIENCE WITH YOU...
...WHILE YOUR SHIP PREPARES FOR DEPAR-TURE.
?
He's not like the guy on TV!
DON'T BE RUDE, KÖNIG.
You don't mind if I come along?
AS YOU WISH.
I'VE GOT KÖNIG WITH ME.
QUEEN LIMEIRA..
DON'T WORRY, ZAZIE.

THE FINEST ATTRACTION OF THE KETHERES AQUARIUM...
...THE ASTRO OCEAN.

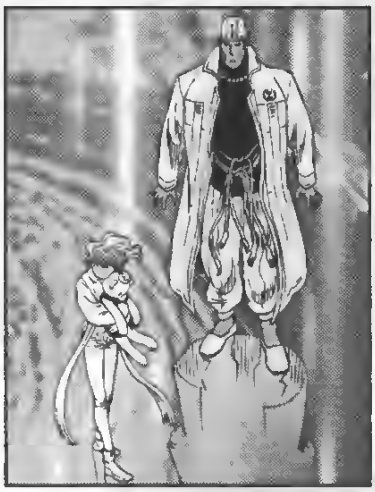
WOW...
IT'S SO... DREAMY!
...TO FORGE A TRUE PEACE AND ORDER REALITY.
I WANT TO PUT THIS WORLD RIGHT...
SHE'S SO CHILD-LIKE.
HEH...
...WILL YOU SPARE US SOME OF YOUR FISH?
...AND WE FINISH MAKING A NICE OCEAN OF OUR OWN...
ONE DAY... WHEN PEACE RETURNS TO MARS...
OF COURSE.

Sparkle!
I'LL HOLD YOU TO THAT!
ALMOST MAKES ME FORGET WHO I AM...
SUCH A SWEET SMILE.
...BUT I'D LIKE THE KINGDOM PARLIAMENT TO BE THE ONE TO UNIFY MARS.
S-SNAP OUT OF IT!
I HAVEN'T MADE THIS PUBLIC YET...

pwop
Is that so?
LADDER is the main proponent of this abomination!
Both the MRH* and MFB** kill our children—or capture them for use in a juvenile infantry!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO AGE.
WHY NOT STAY YOUNG?
You'll be an old granny by then!
OH, DEAR.
ONCE THE NANOTECH CONTROL THEORY IS COMPLETED, THAT POLICY WILL BE MOOT.
JUST GIVE US THIRTY TO FIFTY YEARS.
IN AN AGE OF WAR, YES.
BUT ONCE AT PEACE, WILL PEOPLE HAVE THE STRENGTH OF HEART...
The Kingdom Parliament wishes to preserve this natural cycle.
We're born, fall in love, have children, and die.

*MRH (Mars Republik Heer): Mars Republic Army
**MFB (Mars Front der Befreien): Mars Liberation Front

EVEN YOU...
...MIGHT LIKE TO LIVE FOREVER, QUEEN LIMEIRA, IF YOUR FATHER WAS STILL ALIVE...
...TO FACE OLD AGE—AND EVEN *DEATH?* SHOULD WE *FORCE* THAT ON THEM?



FATHER...

THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF LIFE AND DEATH...
...TOO MUCH FOR A MERE MORTAL TO GRASP. BUT, YOU SEE... THAT'S *PRECISELY* WHY WE ACCEPT THE AGE-OLD CYCLE, OBSOLETE AS IT MAY BE, OVER YOUR METHUSELYZATION.

I WENT TOO FAR... FORGIVE ME.

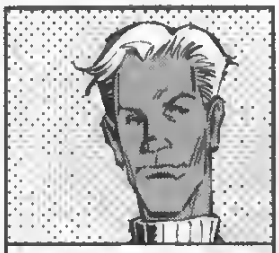
THAT'S OKAY.
Not nice!

IT MAY BE A CLICHÉ...
...BUT MY FATHER LIVES ON... IN MY HEART.
AM I THE ONE BEING TESTED HERE?!
A NAIVE CHILD ONE MOMENT, AN ASTUTE ORATOR THE NEXT...
SUCH A CYPHER, THIS GIRL.
...
...
...
...
HUH ?!
THAT'S A QUOTE FROM "SPACE MBADI!"
VIP
"DEATH MAY COME, BUT MY AMBITIONS WILL LIVE ON!

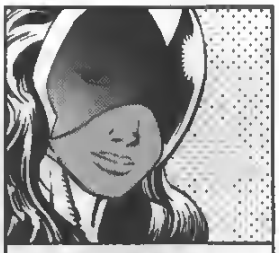
TV series "Space Mbadi"
Produced by Vesta 5tudios. 156 episodes (and a dozen TV specials) of this epic adventure aired between E5 543 and 556. Based on the 25-volume series "**Space Hero Mbadi**," by bestselling novelist (and Ceres resident) Oleg Zaccagni, the action-packed drama follows ORDER, the interplanetary investigative team, from its creation to its demise.

Captain Mbadi
Roy Nars

Reveila
W. Conant

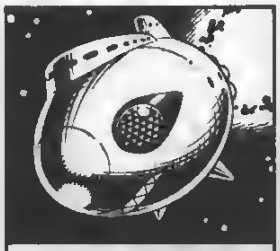


1st Officer Chandier
V. Manabendra

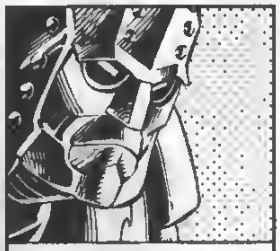


Lakshmi
N. Tripathi

Dr. Maurois
J. Cugnot



Yakoviev 44
(voice of) A. Volgin



Martian Warrior Menzel
G. Helder

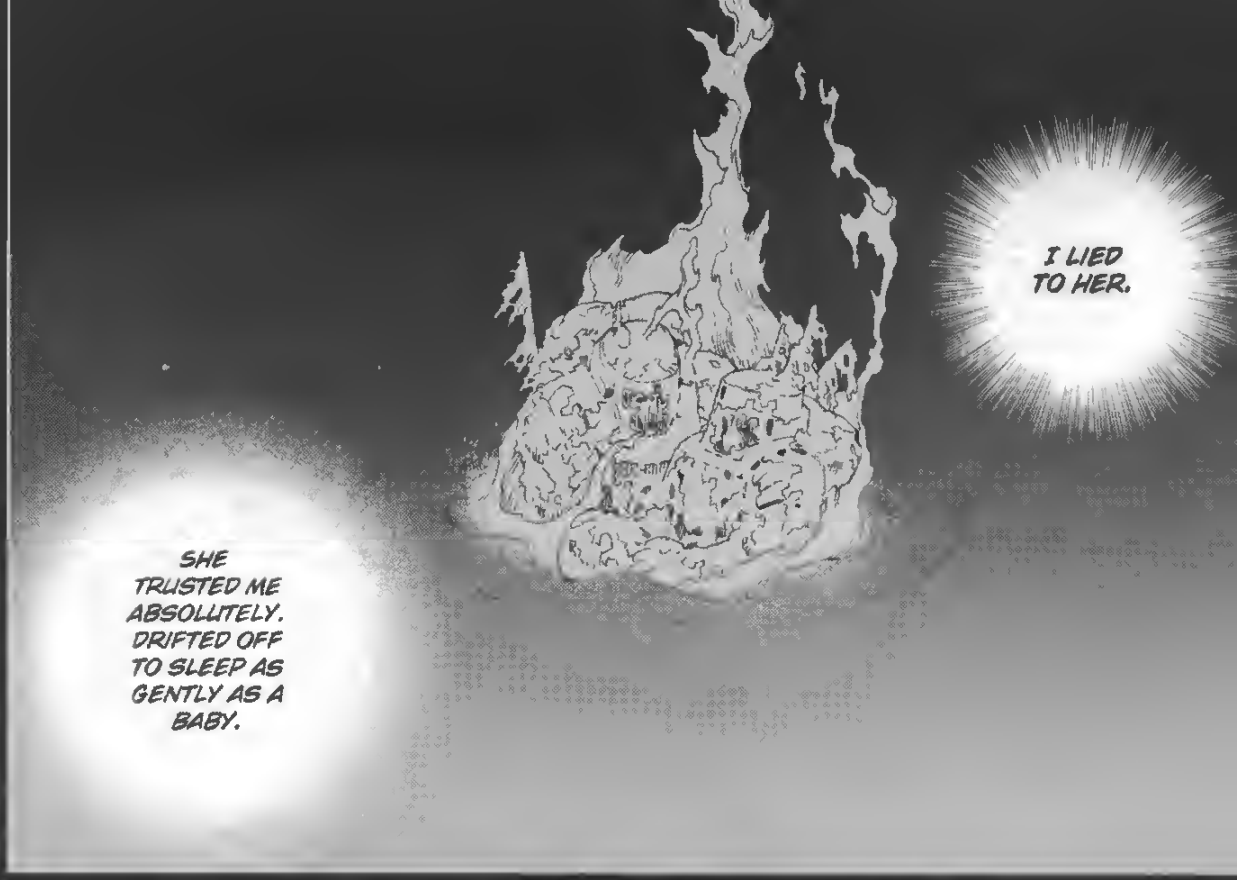
Dr. Vares
K. T. Conrad

ALL FICTION.
WHAT ABOUT "DUEL ON PLUTO," WHEN YOU WERE TOSSED INTO SPACE WITHOUT A SPACESUIT AND SURVIVED BY USING YOGA TECHNIQUES?
OHHH!
THE WRITERS EMBELLISHED A LOT.
BUT I DIDN'T WRITE THE SHOW!
So naive!
YOU...YOU DECEIVED ME!
It's not real!?
THAT'S FACT.
YES.
AND THE ROMANCE? LAKSHMI... WAS SHE REAL?
...but was vanquished on Pluto! The ORDER perished, save for Captain Aga Mbadi.
In 473, Dr. Vares committed unspeakable acts of nano-terrorism...
That's what the history books say...

AH, LAKSHMI ...
...THE ONLY WOMAN I EVER LOVED.
THE REALITY WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE NOVELS AND THE TV SERIES.

CHARON, THE MOON OF PLUTO, HUNG OVER US AS IF IT COULD DROP FROM THE SKY AT ANY MOMENT.
...IN DRIFTS OF SILENT METHANE SNOW.
WE WERE LEFT, JUST THE TWO OF US, IN THE -230 C° COLD...

I HAD TO GAMBLE ON VARES SENDING SOMEONE TO CONFIRM OUR DEATHS.
ALL THE REST OF MY CREW WERE KILLED.
...AND USED YOGA TECHNIQUES TO LOWER MY HEART RATE AND RESPIRATION TO ENTER A STATE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION.
I CUT ALL POWER TO OUR SPACESUITS EXCEPT FOR MINIMAL HEAT TO CONSERVE BATTERY POWER...
BUT LAKSHMI...SHE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO INDUCE SUCH A CONTROLLED COMA.
SO COLD...
...SO VERY COLD...
I'LL SAVE YOU.
...I LIED TO HER.
AND SO I...
REST, LAKSHMI. SLEEP...


I LIED TO HER.
SHE TRUSTED ME ABSOLUTELY. DRIFTED OFF TO SLEEP AS GENTLY AS A BABY.

THE SMALLEST AGITATION IN MY BREATHING WOULD HAVE MEANT FAILURE... DEATH.

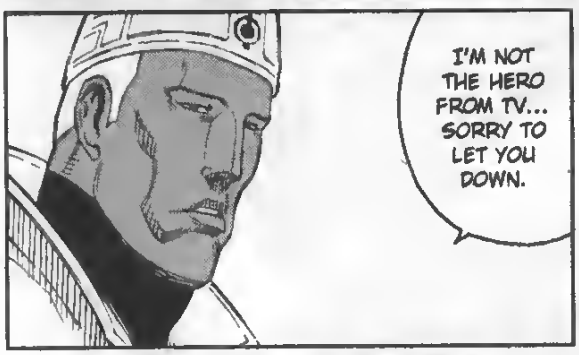
...AS THE WARMTH SLOWLY FADED FROM LAKSHMI'S BODY...
THAT DAY...

...THE MAN WHO LOVED HER...FELT HIS OWN SOUL GO COLD AND DIE.

ONLY I, THEIR CAPTAIN, SURVIVED.
ALL MY CREW WERE KILLED IN THAT BATTLE.
SO MUCH LOSS...
...AND FOR *WHAT!?*
EVERY CHOICE WAS THE RIGHT ONE!
I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO... WITH *NO REGRETS!*
TO BRING ORDER TO THE WORLD!

THOSE DAYS ARE LONG PAST.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO OPEN SUCH WOUNDS!
sob
I'M SO SORRY!
sob
Runny makeup, Limeira.


I'M NOT THE HERO FROM TV... SORRY TO LET YOU DOWN.

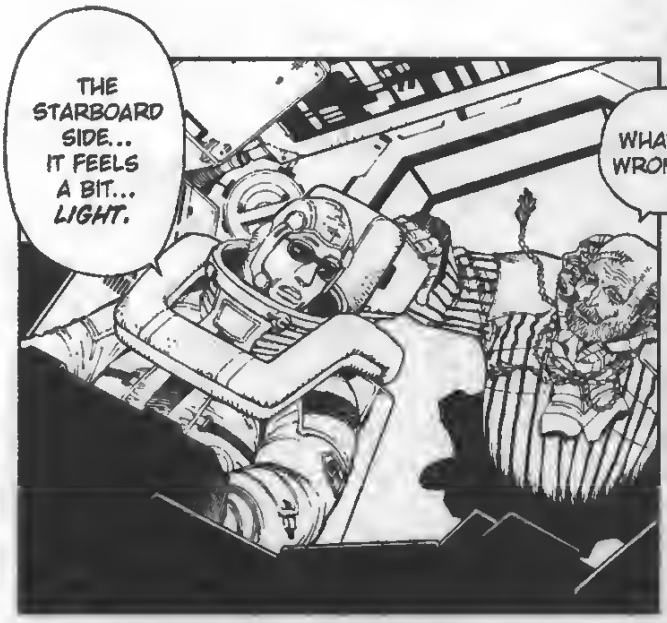
MEETING THE *REAL* YOU MADE THIS WHOLE TRIP WORTHWHILE.
NOT AT ALL!

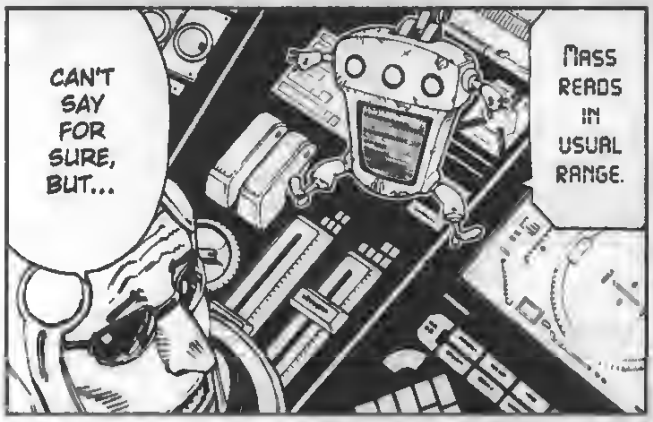
STRANGE. I'VE NEVER TOLD A SOUL... SO WHY *YOU*?
I DON'T SPEAK OF IT.

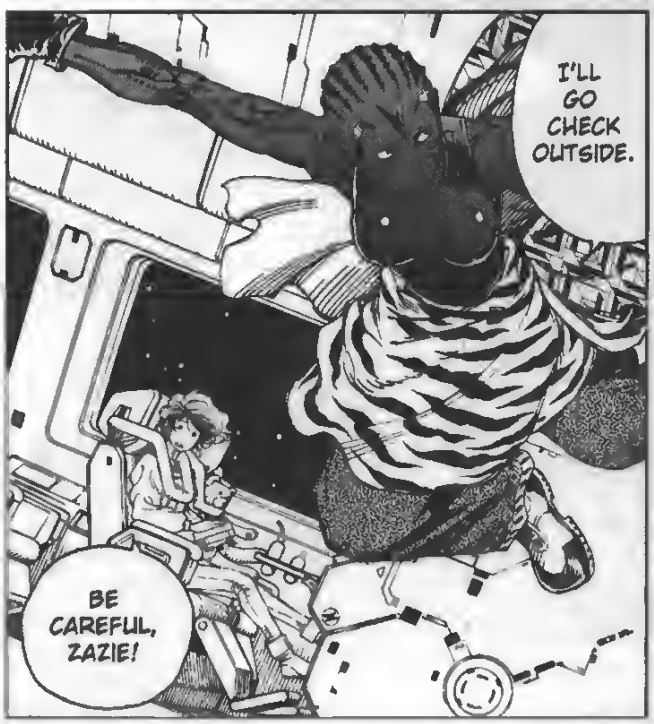
...BEFORE YOU SAVE THE WORLD...
BUT...
...YOU SHOULD SAVE YOURSELF.

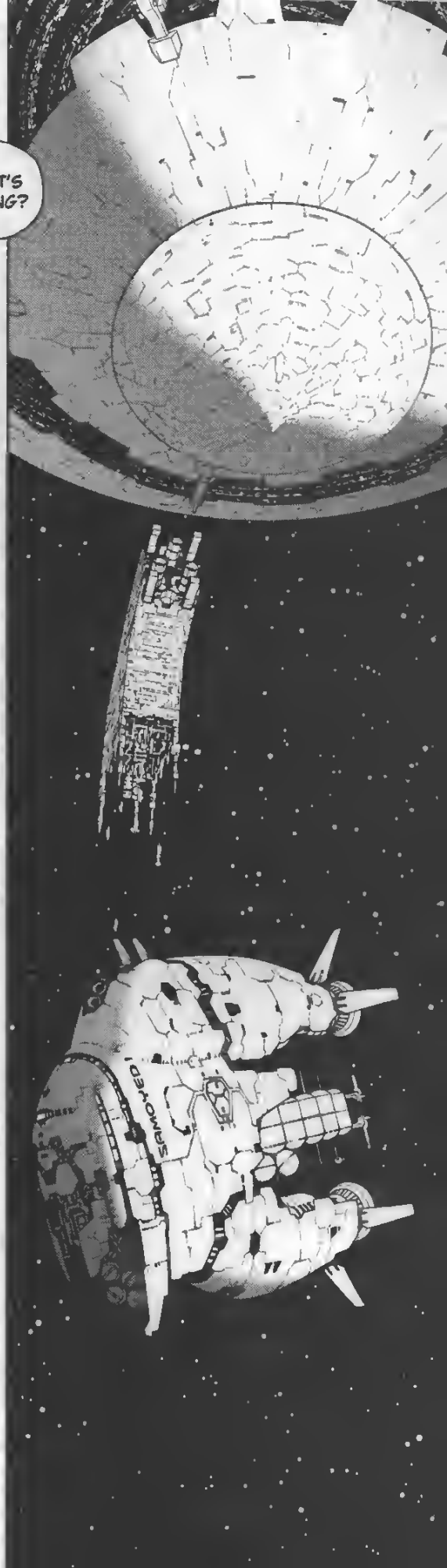
SAMOYED
rmmm
I WANT TO TELL HER...
...TO SHOUT IT OUT!
...THIS WEIGHT... ON MY HEART?!
WHAT IS THIS...

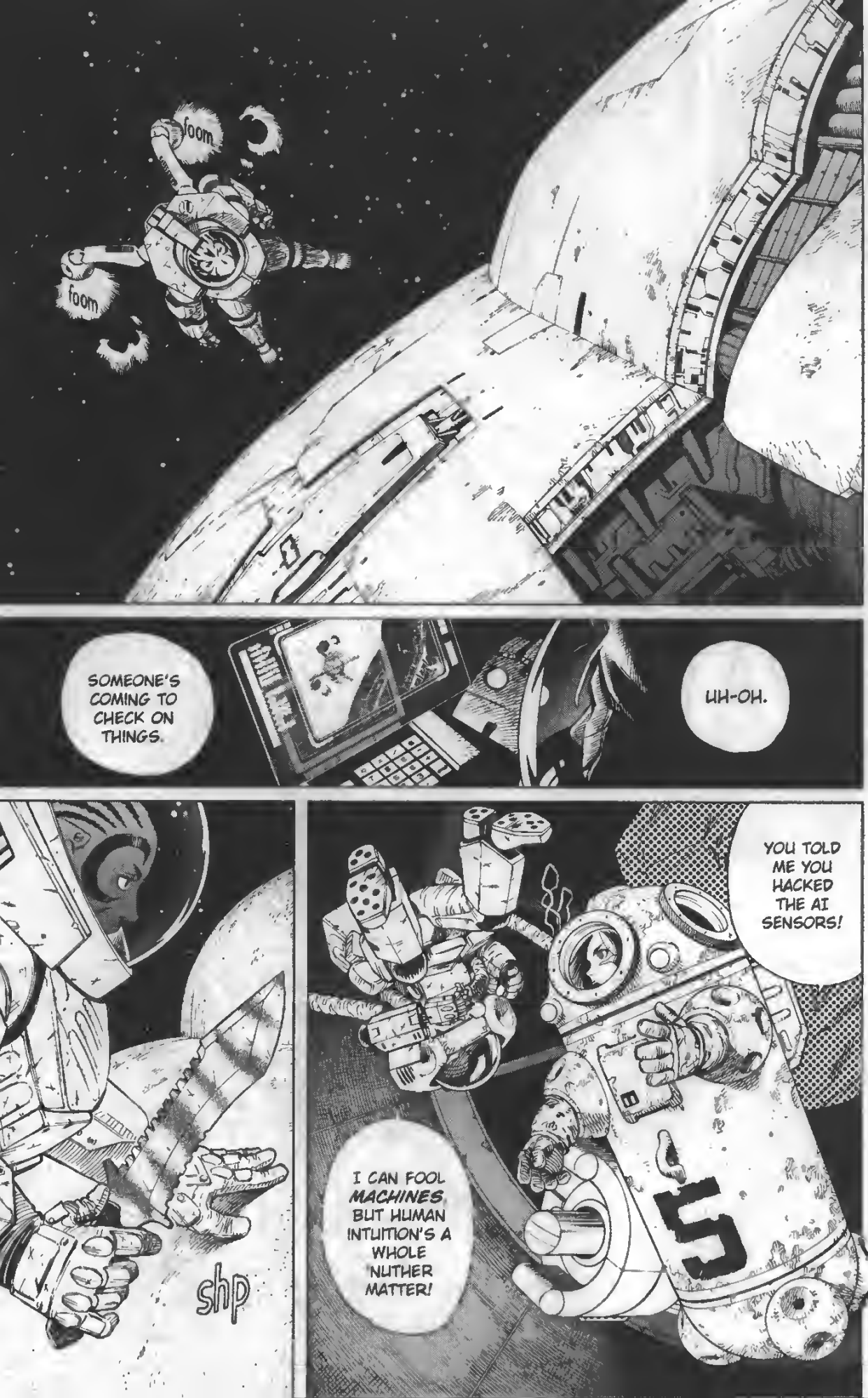
I WAS THE ONE WHO ORDERED YOUR FATHER'S ASSAS-SINATION!
QUEEN LIMEIRA! IT WAS I...
I WILL PUT THIS WORLD RIGHT...
...THE WAY IT SHOULD BE!
...I SWEAR...
QUEEN LIMEIRA! I...
fwup


THE STARBOARD SIDE... IT FEELS A BIT... LIGHT.
WHAT'S WRONG?

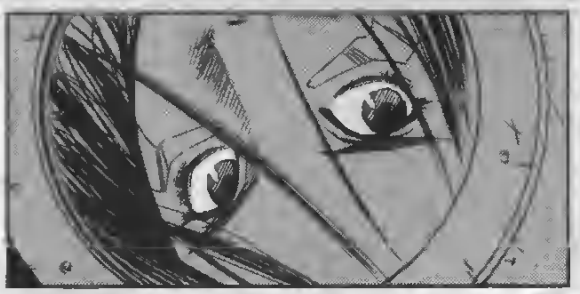

CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, BUT...
MASS READS IN USUAL RANGE.


I'LL GO CHECK OUTSIDE.
BE CAREFUL, ZAZIE!


SAMOYED

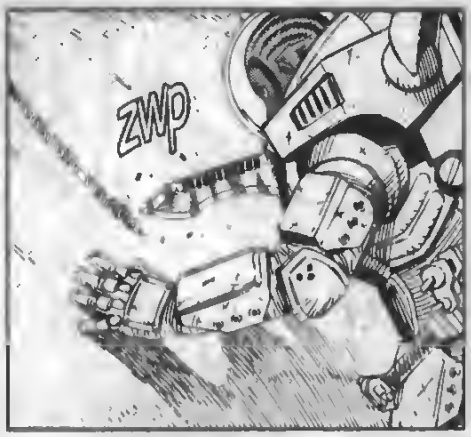

foom
foom
SOMEONE'S COMING TO CHECK ON THINGS.
UH-OH.
shp
YOU TOLD ME YOU HACKED THE AI SENSORS!
I CAN FOOL *MACHINES*, BUT HUMAN INTUITION'S A WHOLE NUTHER MATTER!

kng
tnk
tonk!
skak...
skrrk



Boom
Boom
Boom
Boom

phew!

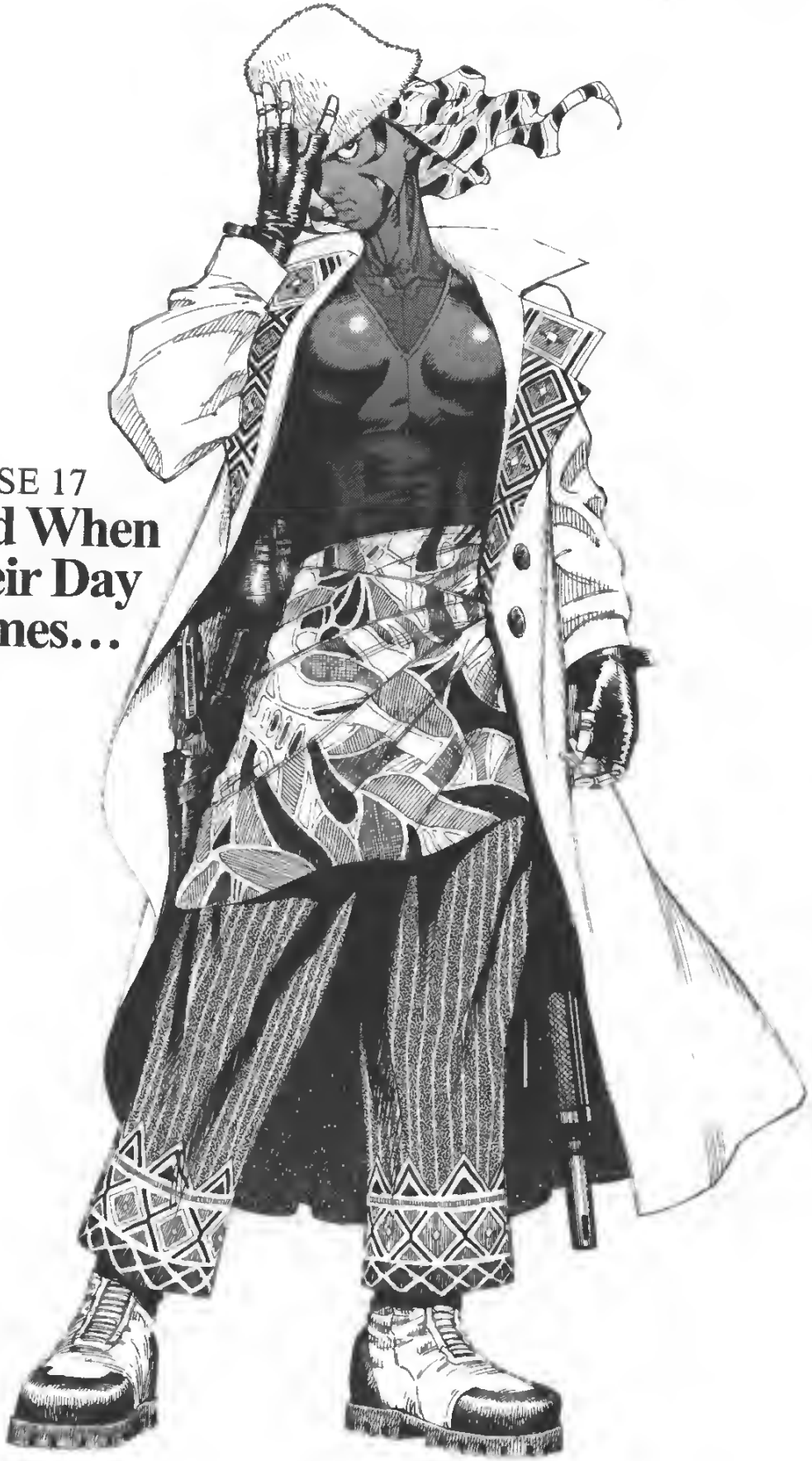

ZWP

wam
OW!
OWWWWW!
PING!
SK
skash

WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
LOOKS LIKE I'VE CAUGHT US SOME STOWAWAYS!

PHASE 17

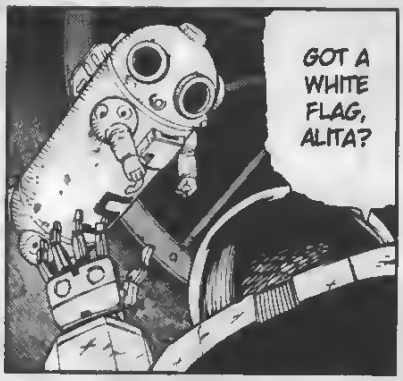
And When Their Day Comes...



SPLUT
GAAH!
FZZZZ
URK!
ZZZZIP
EMERGENCY! SUIT PRESSURE AND TEMP DROPPING FAST!
GYAH!
WE'RE IN DEEP DOO-DOO...
OUCH...
OF COURSE I'M NOT OKAY, DAMMIT...
UFF!
PRESSURE'S STABLE NOW. YOU OKAY, BOSS?
HFF!

I'LL DISPOSE OF THEM NOW.
PROBLEM SOLVED...

PING, YOU FOOL!

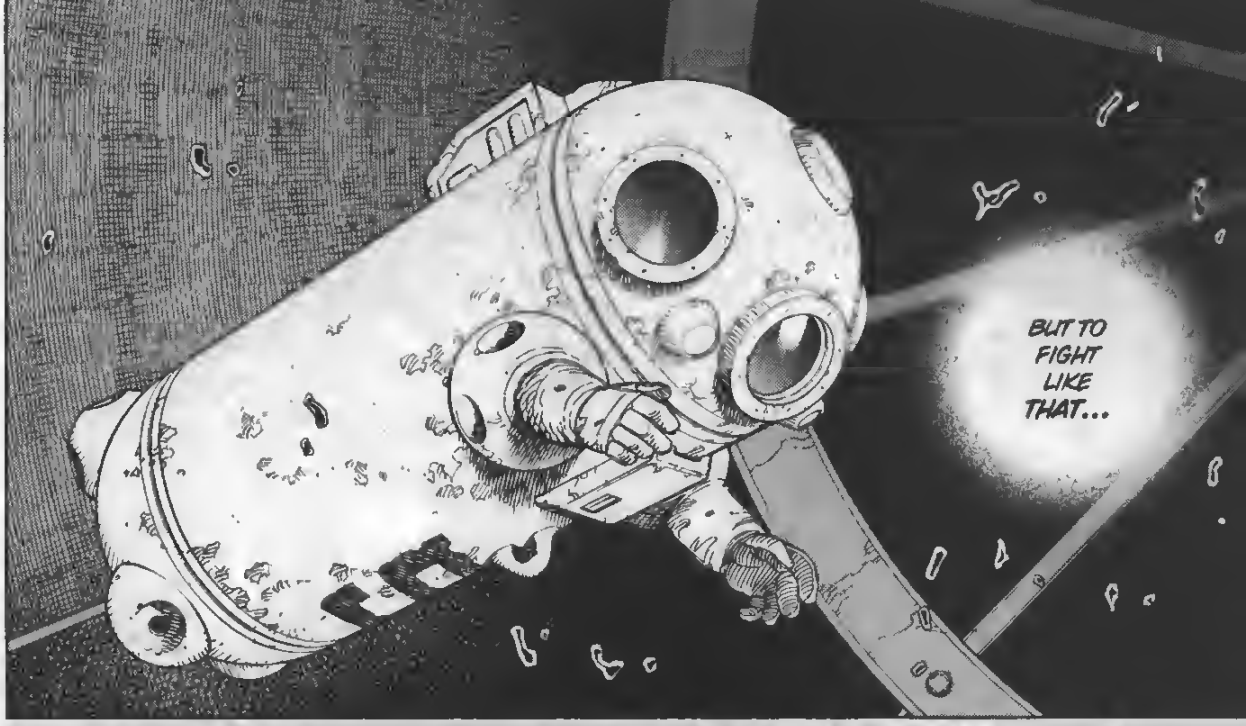

GOT A WHITE FLAG, ALITA?

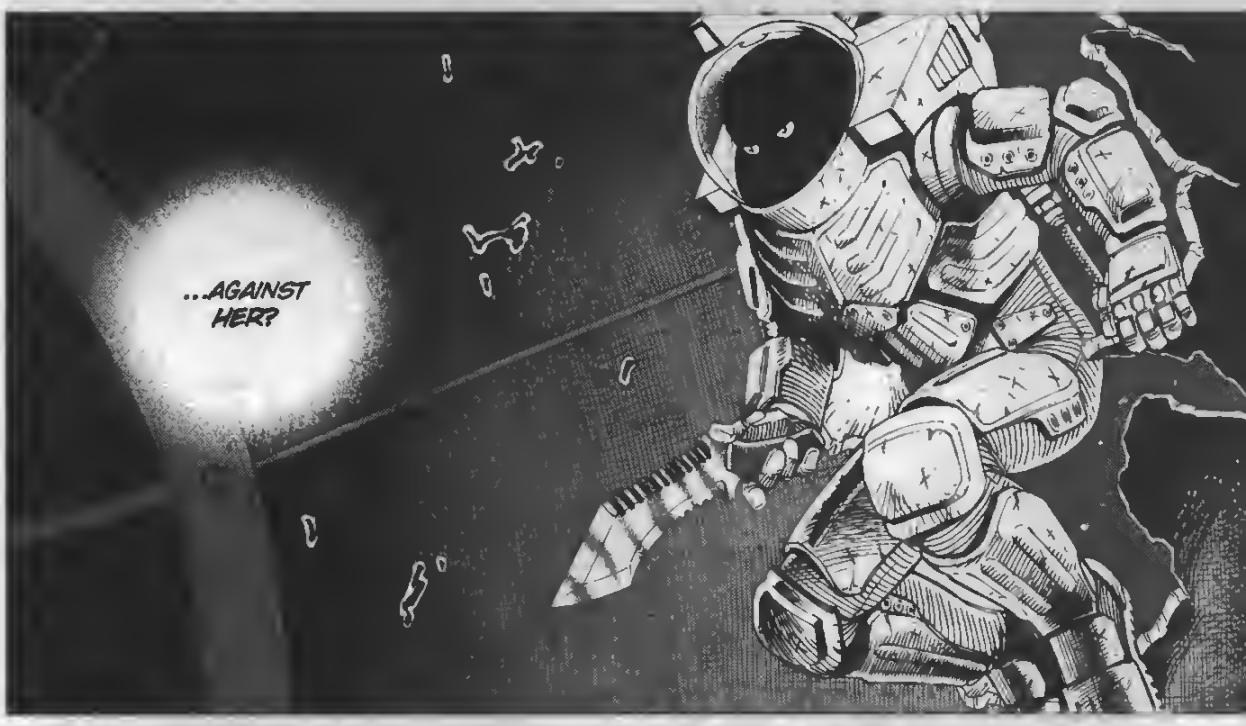
MARTIAN WARRIORS ARE ALL BUSINESS. MAYBE IF WE GIVE UP...
SHE WON'T GO DOWN EASY!

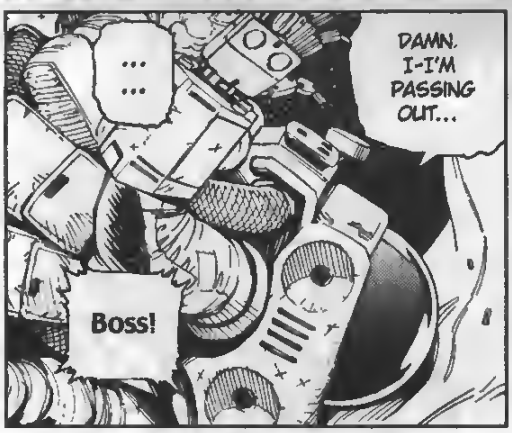
LEAVE THIS TO ME!

THAT'S RIGHT! ALITA IS...
...FROM MARS, TOO!

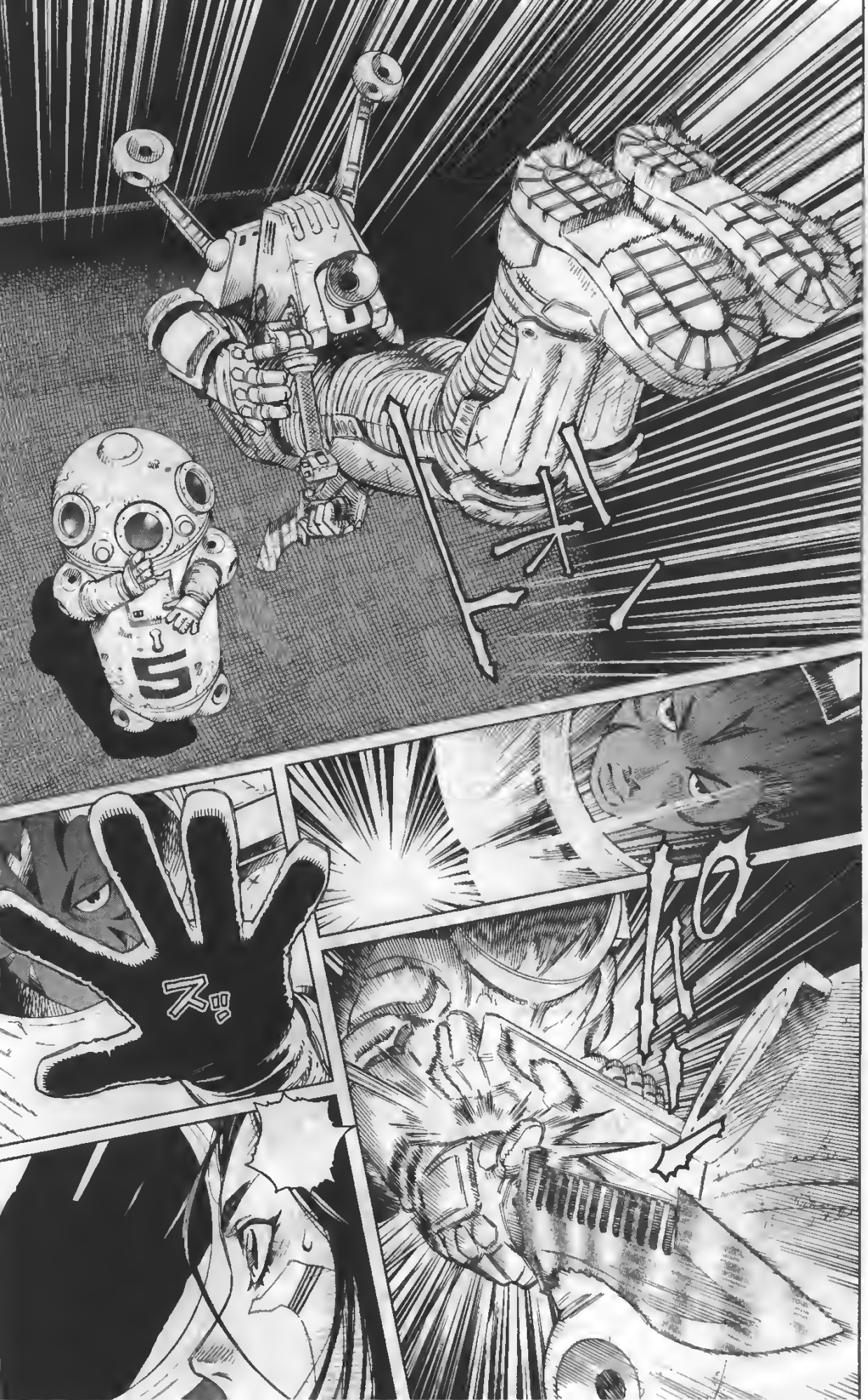
WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD IF WE SURREN-DER!
CAN'T YOU SEE IT IN HER EYES?


BUT TO FIGHT LIKE THAT...

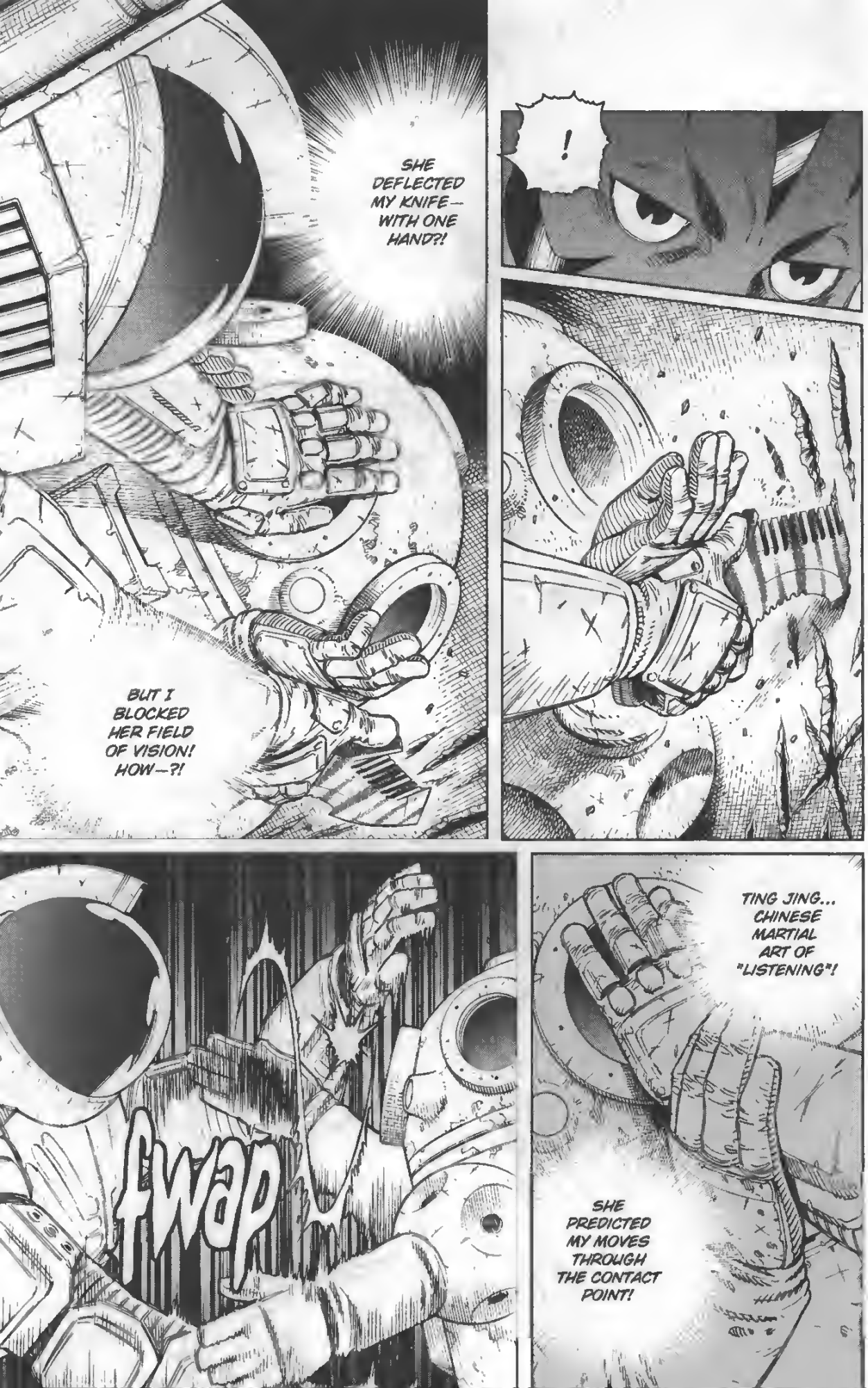

...AGAINST HER?


...
...
DAMN. I-I'M PASSING OUT...
Boss!

ALITA'S GREAT AND ALL BUT... GIMME A BREAK!


5
ㅈ..

Voosh
klang
BAM
BAM
BAM


SHE DEFLECTED MY KNIFE— WITH ONE HAND?!
BUT I BLOCKED HER FIELD OF VISION! HOW—?!
!
fwap
TING JING... CHINESE MARTIAL ART OF "LISTENING"!
SHE PREDICTED MY MOVES THROUGH THE CONTACT POINT!

...BUT THIS IS A MATTER OF SURVIVAL!
NOTHING AGAINST YOU...
SKRK
tnk

?!
boing
wsh fwssh
foom
AS I HOPED.
HER TRAINING'S ALL BEEN GRAVITY-BOUND. OUT HERE, SHE'S AN AMATEUR...
OH, YEAH... IN A ZERO GRAVITY STATE, THERE'S NO RESISTANCE! THE LAWS OF ACTION AND REACTION TRANSLATE DIRECTLY...
fsh
N-NO EFFECT AT ALL?!
fsh
BUT I KNOW THIS!
DAMN! IT WAS SO LONG AGO...
WHIP

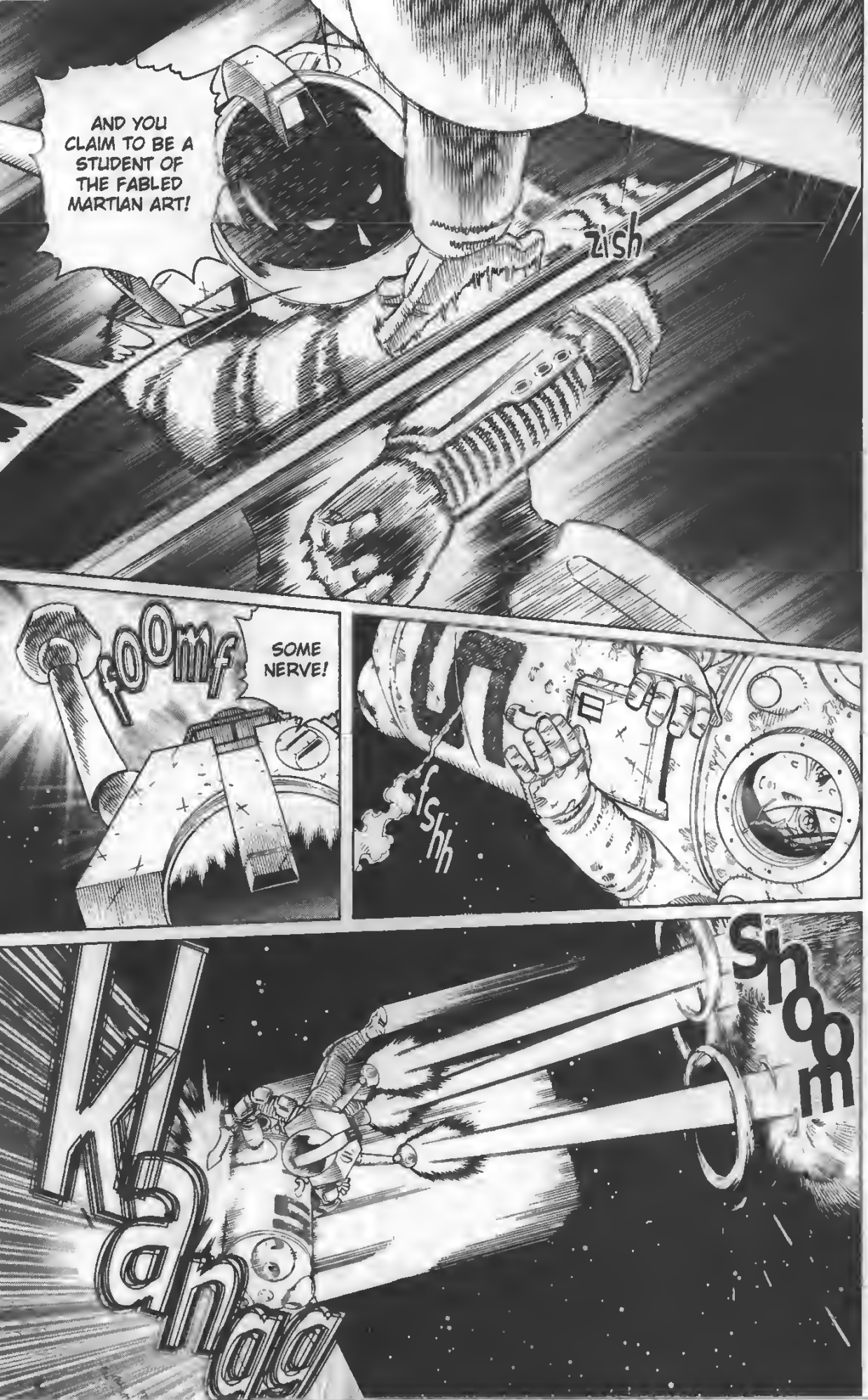
NOW LISTEN UP!
WE'LL START WITH THE BASICS!
ALL PANZER KUNST BEGINS AT ZERO GRAVITY!
TODAY WE'LL BE PRACTICING STRIKES AND THRUSTS.

WATCH!
wud
SEIZE A PART OF THE BODY, THEN STRIKE!
IF THEY GRAB YOU...
swsh
TARGET THEIR CENTER OF GRAVITY...
...BUT DON'T BECOME PREDICT-ABLE.
FIGHT WITH EASE IN ZERO G, AND YOU'LL MOVE FREELY IN ANY GRAVITY!
THAT IS THE HEART OF THE PANZER KUNST!
twsh
...THROW THEM OFF BALANCE!
STRATEGY IS IN THE CONTACT POINTS.

kash
slam
skreek
ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE IMPROVED!
DIDN'T THINK SHE'D GIVE ME A HARD TIME!
tup
shoom
shoom

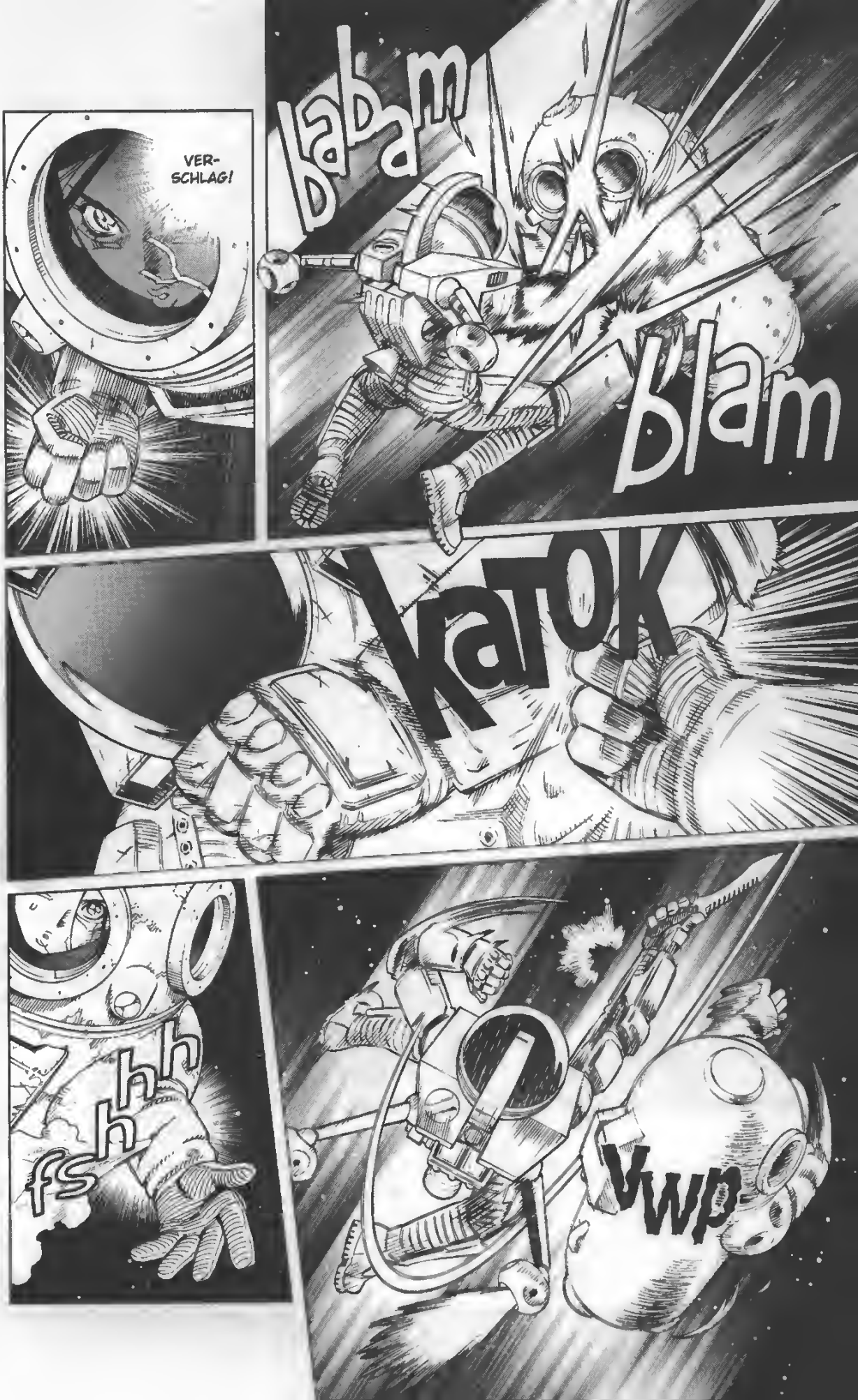
YOU'RE GOOD.
WHAT DOG ARE YOU?
?!
PANZER KUNST.
WHmm
HERTZA HAEON!

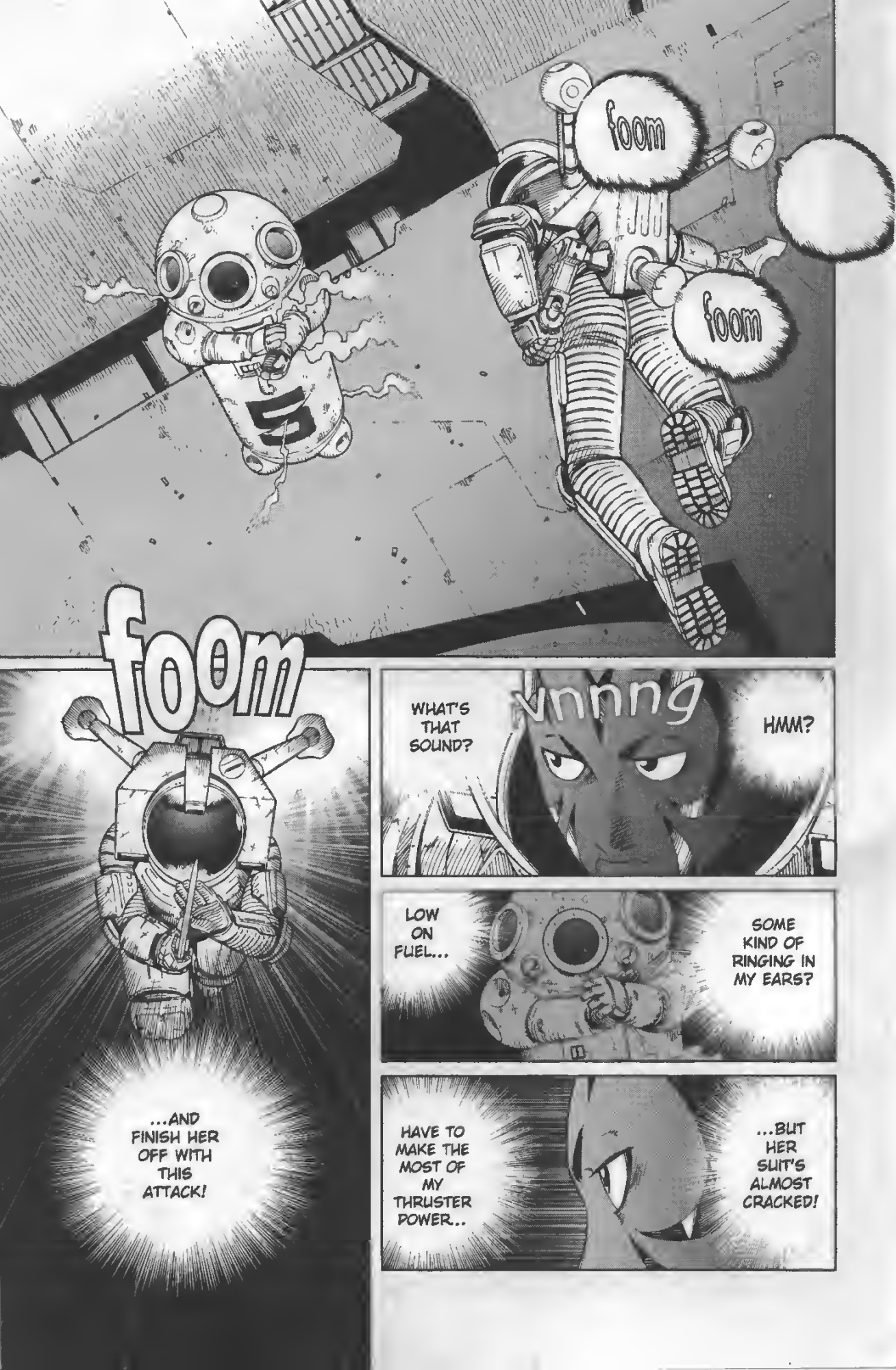
W-WHAT?!
NEGATING MY HERTZA HAEON WITH A VIBRATION OF THE SAME WAVELENGTH ...!
WWWWWW
krk
fist
UNH!
krek
THIS SUIT WON'T LAST IF I INCREASE THE OUTPUT!
WHY SO SHOCKED?
OSCILLATION PUNCHES AREN'T SO RARE ANYMORE.


AND YOU CLAIM TO BE A STUDENT OF THE FABLED MARTIAN ART!
zish
foomf
SOME NERVE!
fshh
Shoom
Kanaa

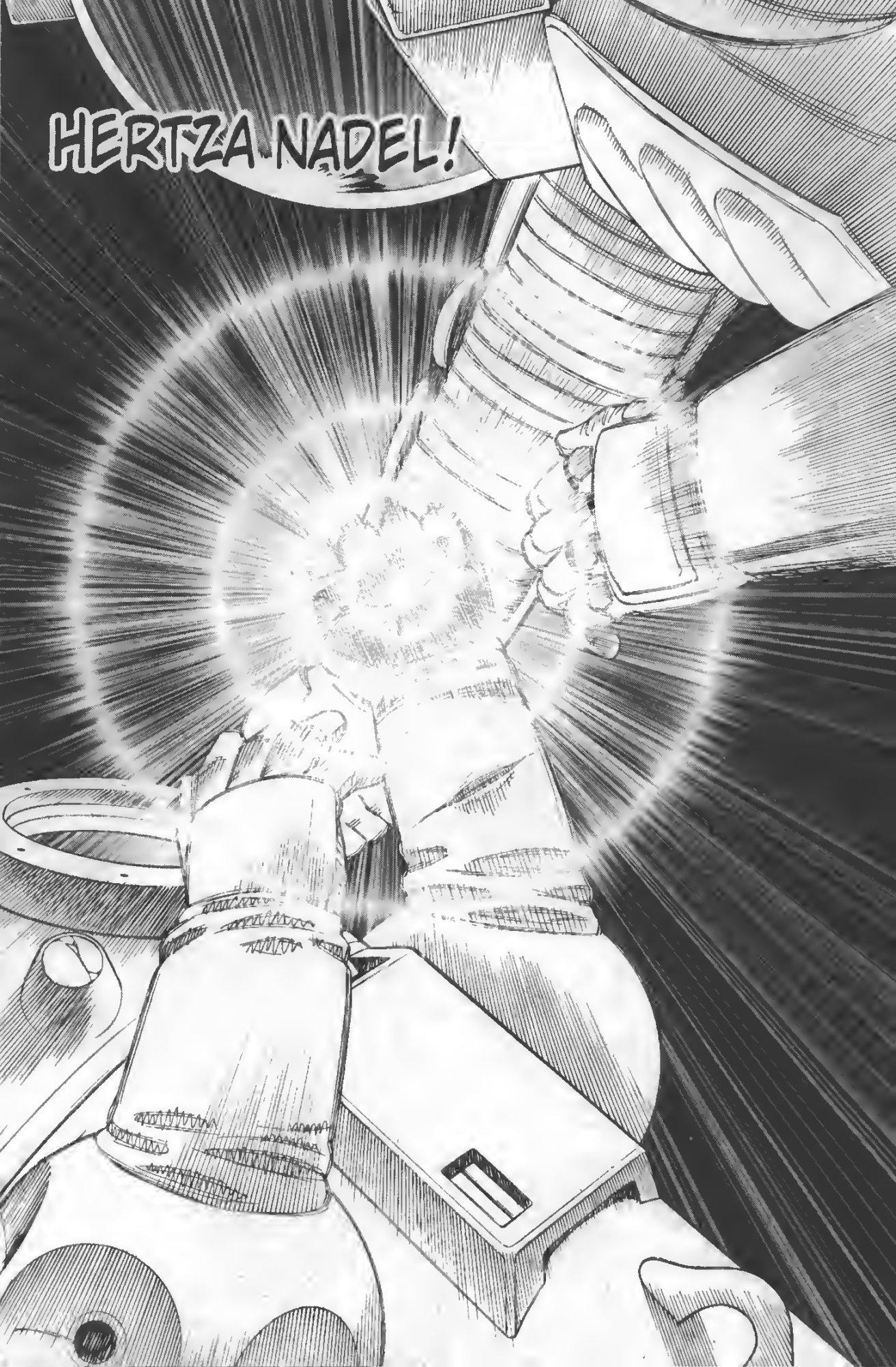
BUT HER FIGHTING STYLE MAKES GOOD SENSE IN SPACE...
...GO FOR THE SUIT AND LET NATURE DO THE REST!
skrk krek
UNH! SHE'S SO ROUGH!
I'VE GOT IT!
MAYBE I'M GOOD ENOUGH TO PULL IT OFF...
twsh
I CAN'T LET HER KEEP THIS UP.
THIS SECRET MOVE...
...MAY BE A BIT HARD, SINCE YOU'VE ONLY JUST MASTERED THE HERTZA HAEON.
...ONE OF THE FEW MOVES THAT GELDA TAUGHT US HERSELF...

IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH...
...BUT IT'S ONE OF THE PANZER KUNST GEHEIMNISSE! BECOME ADEPT AT THIS...
...AND YOU'LL BEAT THE BEST!
kang
fup
TEE, HEE!
SOME SECRET!
I GUESS EVEN GELDA CAN MESS UP!
THAT WAS THE VER-SCHLAG.
CAN'T YOU HEAR IT, ERICA?
IT'S THE TONE OF THE DEVIL.
knk
tnk

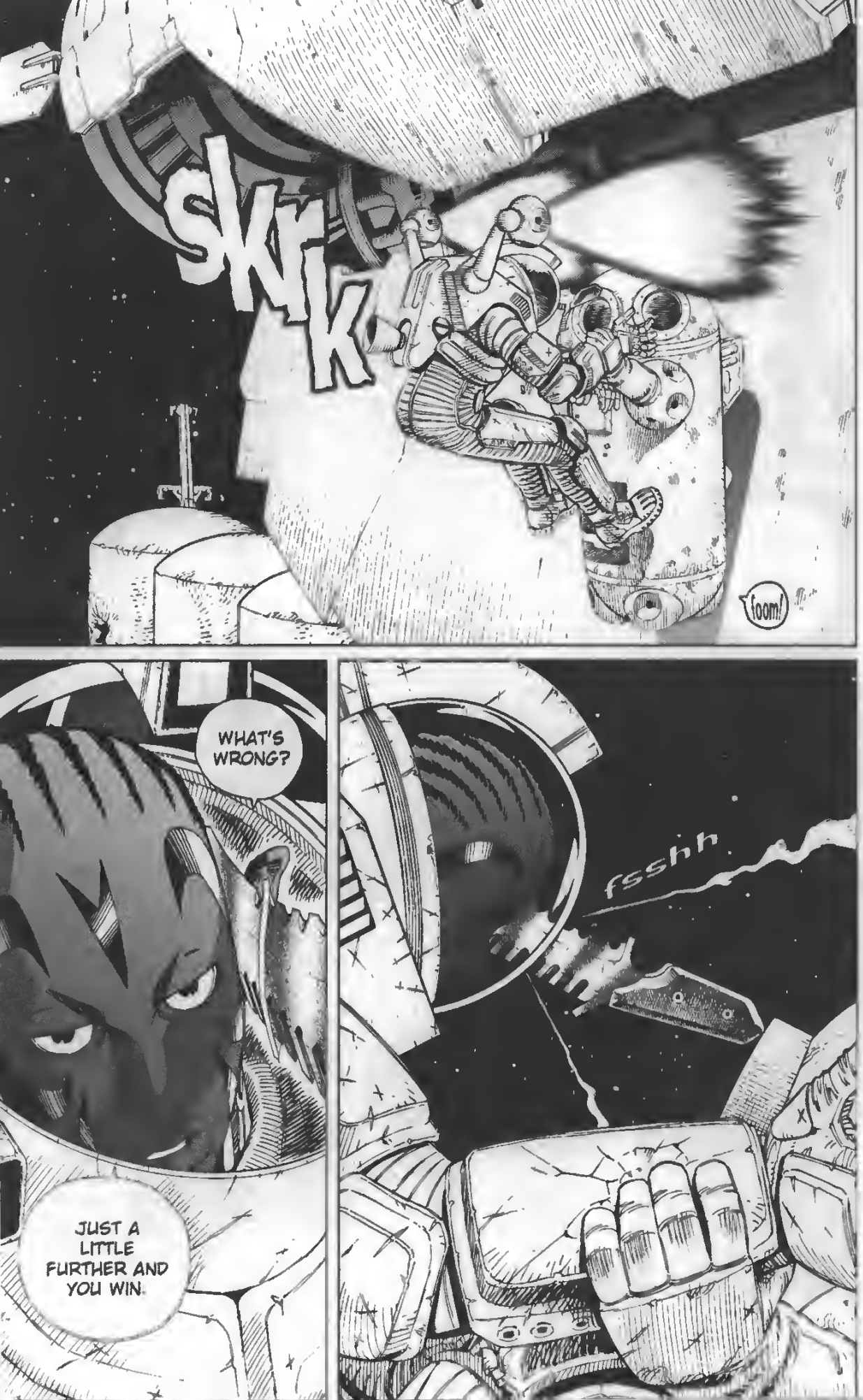

VER-
SCHLAG!
BABAM
BLAM
KATOK
fsh
hh
VWP

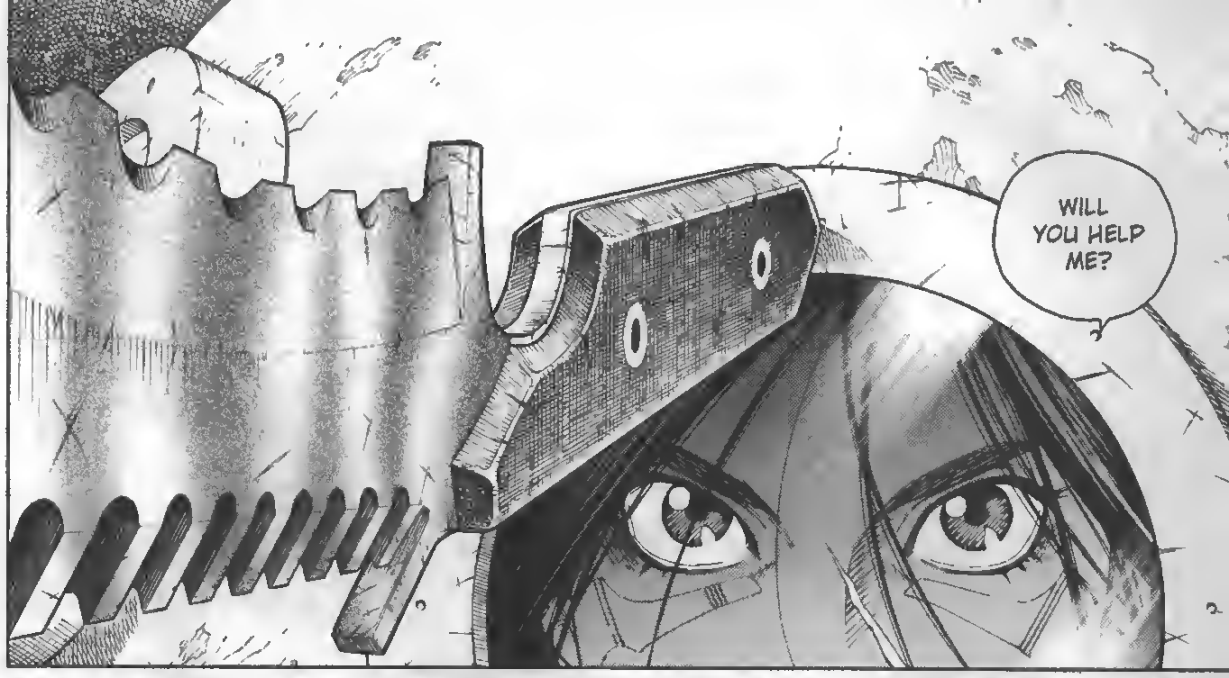

foom
foom
foom
...AND FINISH HER OFF WITH THIS ATTACK!
WHAT'S THAT SOUND?
vnnng
HMM?
LOW ON FUEL...
SOME KIND OF RINGING IN MY EARS?
HAVE TO MAKE THE MOST OF MY THRUSTER POWER..
...BUT HER SUIT'S ALMOST CRACKED!

THE FIRST VERSCHLAG MERELY SETS UP A SHOCKWAVE...
...BEFORE FOCUSING IN THE EXTREMITIES.
...WHICH BOUNCES INSIDE THE BODY LIKE A RUBBER BALL...
IF WE STRIKE LIKE A NEEDLE INTO THAT FOCAL POINT, THE PENT-UP ENERGY...
ftt
...EXPLODES FROM WITHIN! AND THERE YOU HAVE...

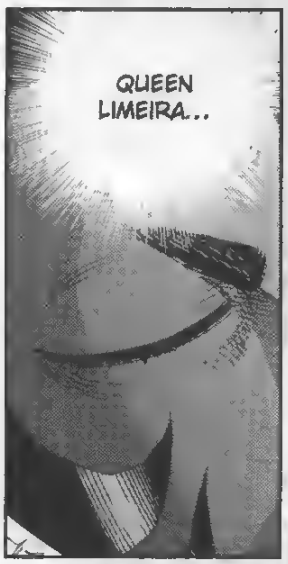

HERTZA NADEL!

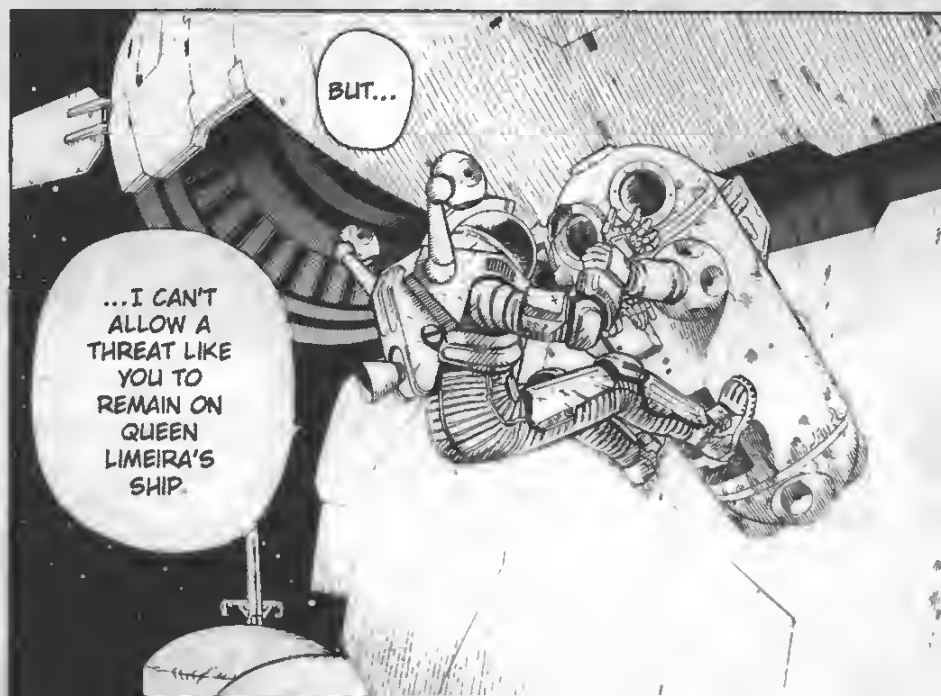
bWam
k'tak
fwsh
tsh
BOTH MY ARMS— DESTROYED IN AN INSTANT!
BUT YOUR SUIT WILL SHATTER WHEN I RAM YOU INTO THE SHIP!

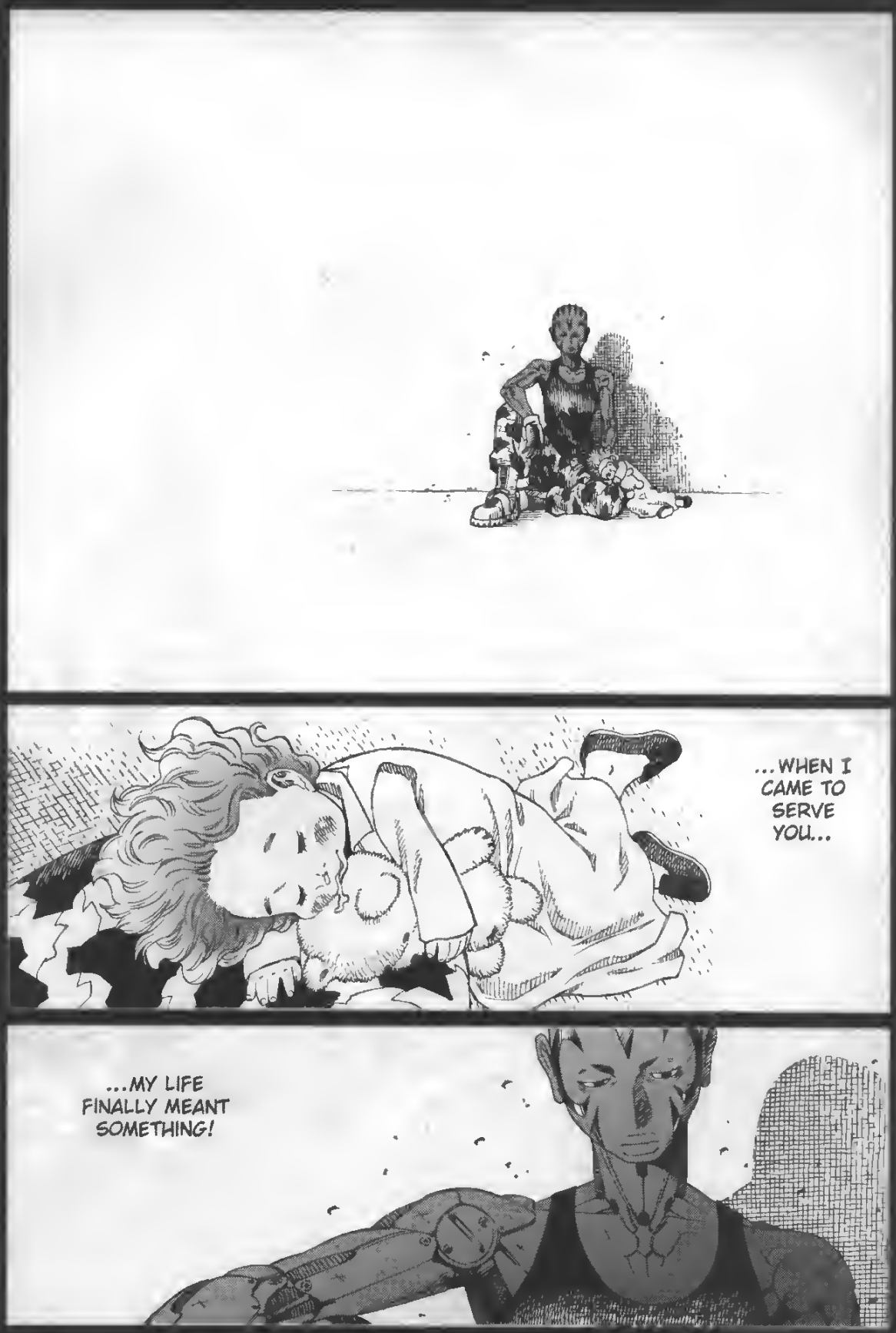

skrk
boom!
WHAT'S WRONG?
JUST A LITTLE FURTHER AND YOU WIN.
fsshh


WILL YOU HELP ME?

YOU'D BE A STRONG ALLY.
...
...

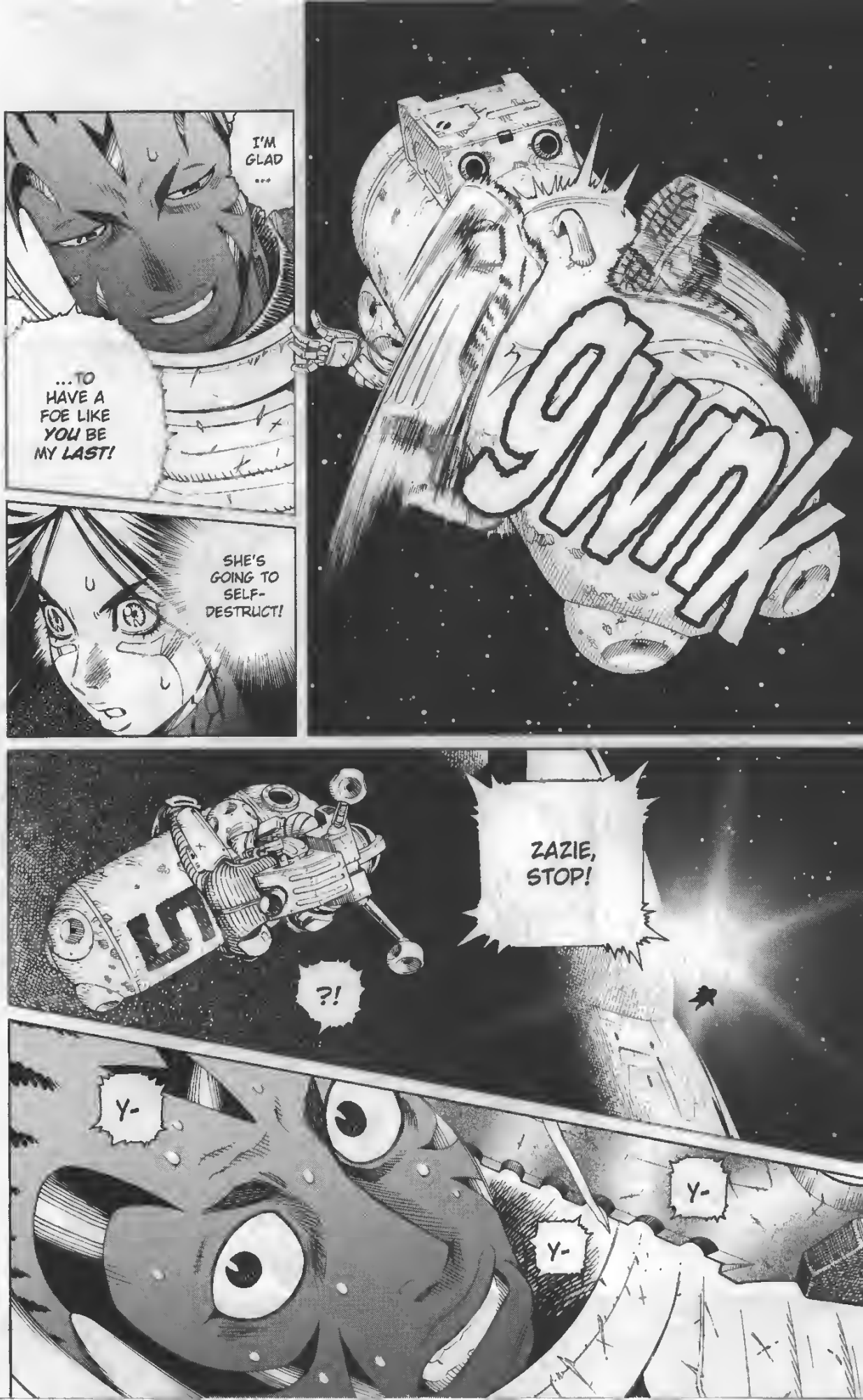

QUEEN LIMEIRA...


BUT...
...I CAN'T ALLOW A THREAT LIKE YOU TO REMAIN ON QUEEN LIMEIRA'S SHIP.

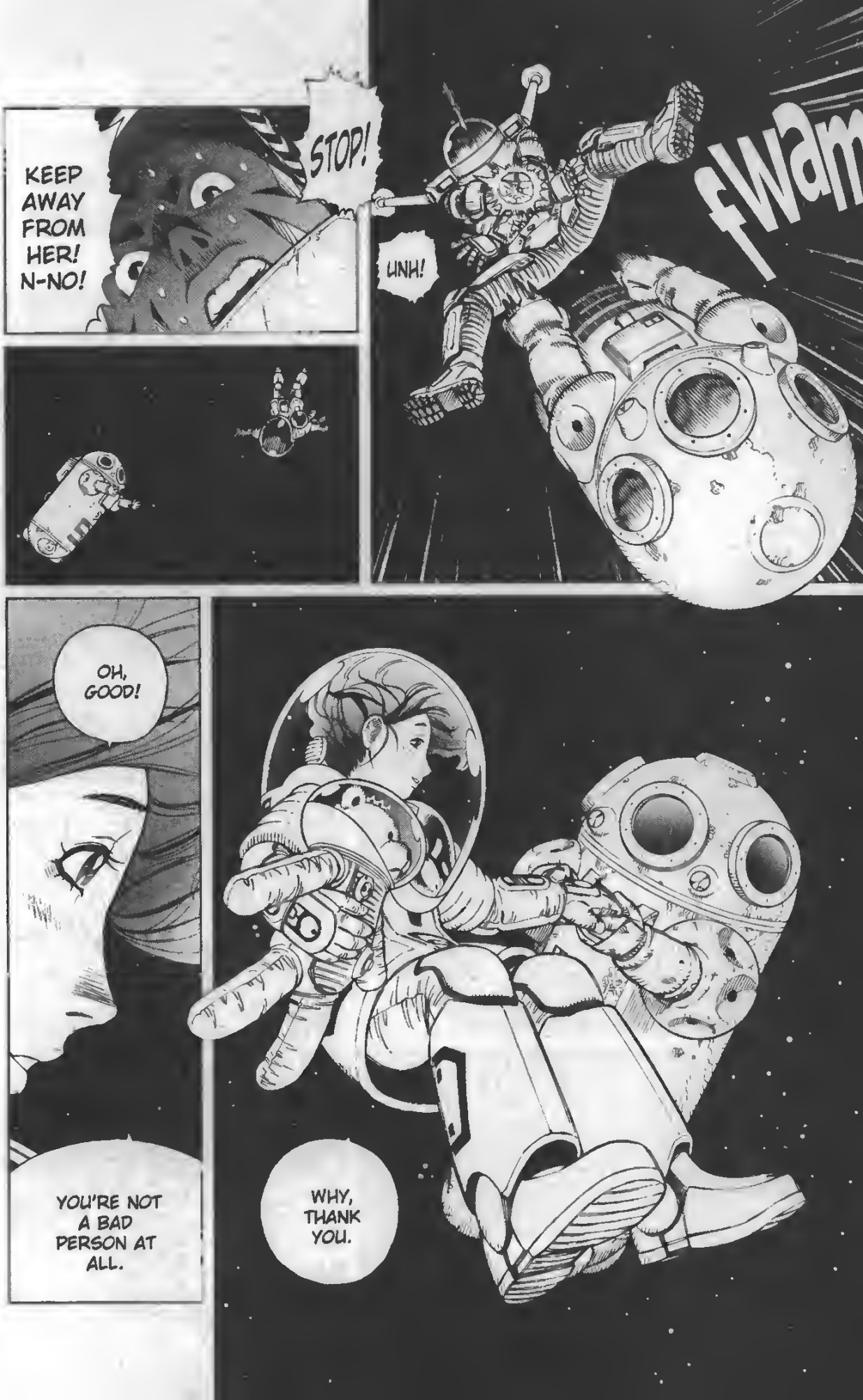

...WHEN I CAME TO SERVE YOU...
...MY LIFE FINALLY MEANT SOMETHING!

...ONE IS BUT A TARGET.
ON THE BATTLE-FIELD

...ONLY POSTPONE THE INEVITABLE.
EVEN THE FINEST WARRIORS...
...WHAT WILL THEY LEAVE BEHIND? ANYTHING?
AND WHEN THEIR DAY COMES...
...PROTECT THE *FUTURE* YOU WILL CREATE.
MY LIFE... WILL NOT BE IN VAIN.
hee!
...THAT I WILL PROTECT YOU...
BUT I SWEAR...


I'M GLAD ...
...TO HAVE A FOE LIKE YOU BE MY LAST!
SHE'S GOING TO SELF-DESTRUCT!
GWOK
ZAZIE, STOP!
?!
Y-
Y-
Y-

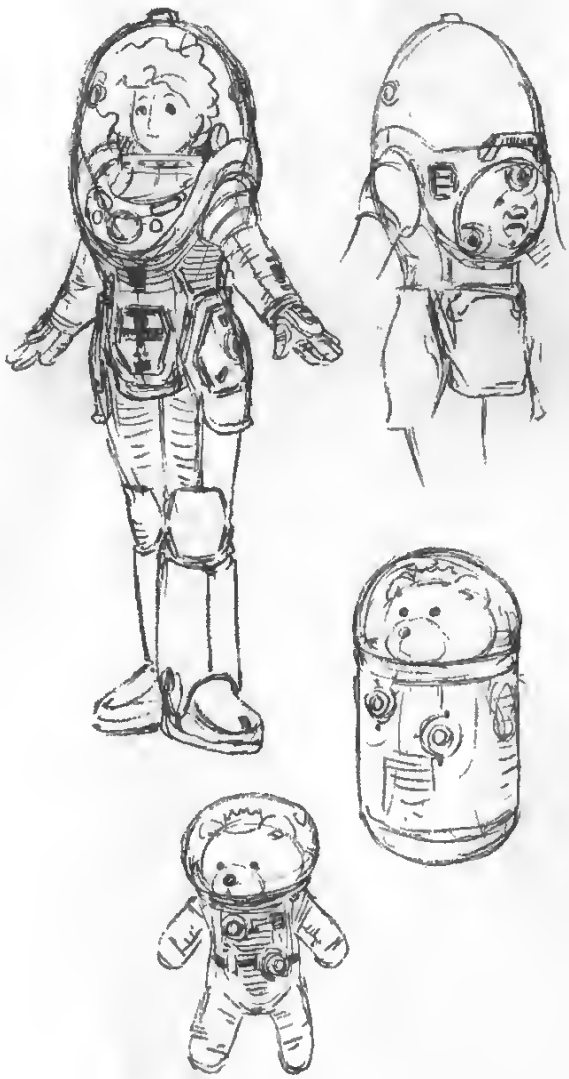
Y-YOUR HIGH-NESS!
I FORBID YOU TO DIE!
HUH?
Y-YOUR HIGH-NESS!
flip flap
I CAN'T STOP.
WHEN DID SHE GET OUT THERE?!
PLEASE COME BACK! YOU'RE IN DANGER!


KEEP AWAY FROM HER! N-NO!
STOP!
UNH!
fWam
OH, GOOD!
YOU'RE NOT A BAD PERSON AT ALL.
WHY, THANK YOU.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
ALITA...
...YOKO.

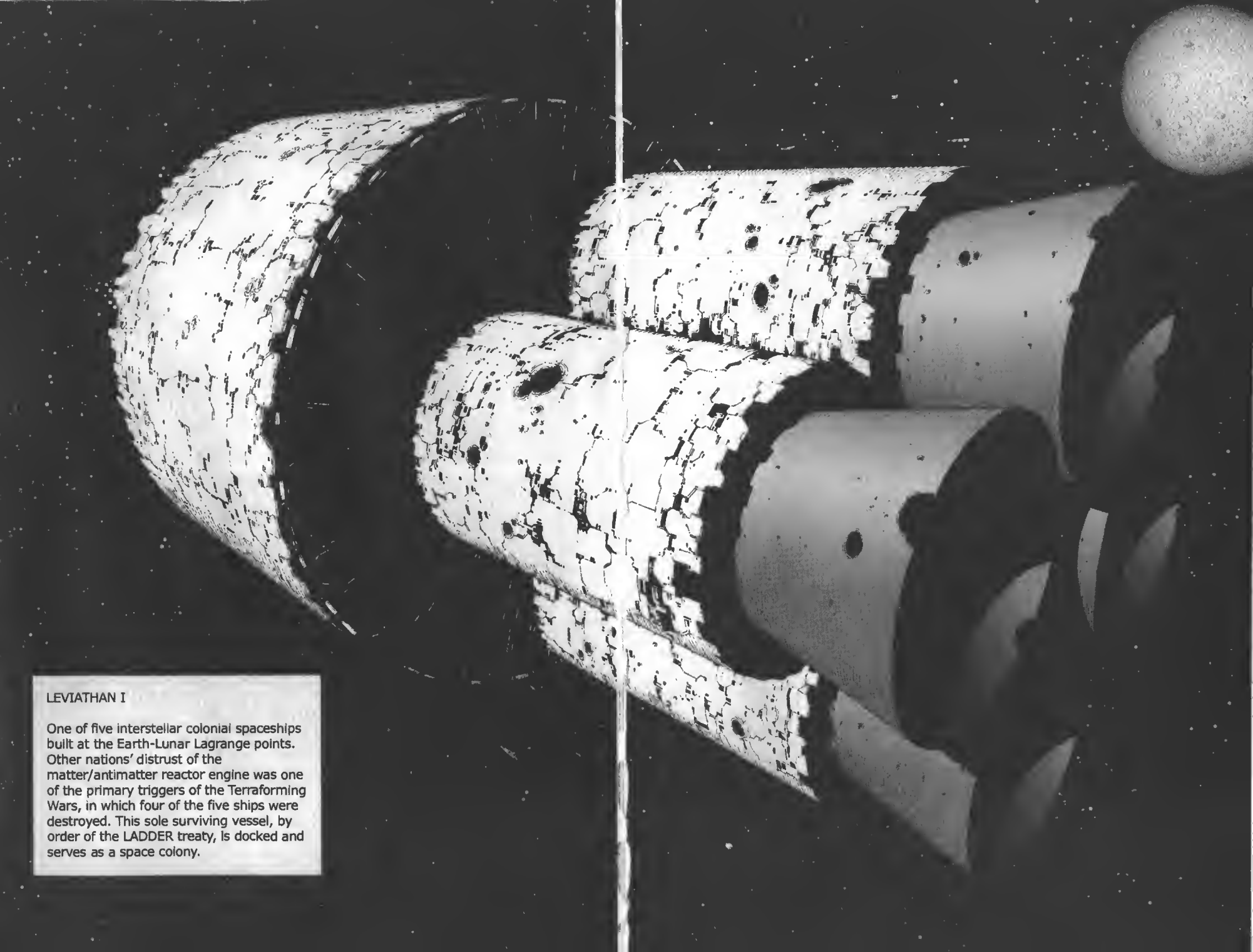
The last chapter was sitting on my desk
when my headphone cord knocked
over my drink. I'm real bad about that.
I lost a loptop that way around a year ago.
So I apoligize for any visable watermarks
on this last chapter.

Shades



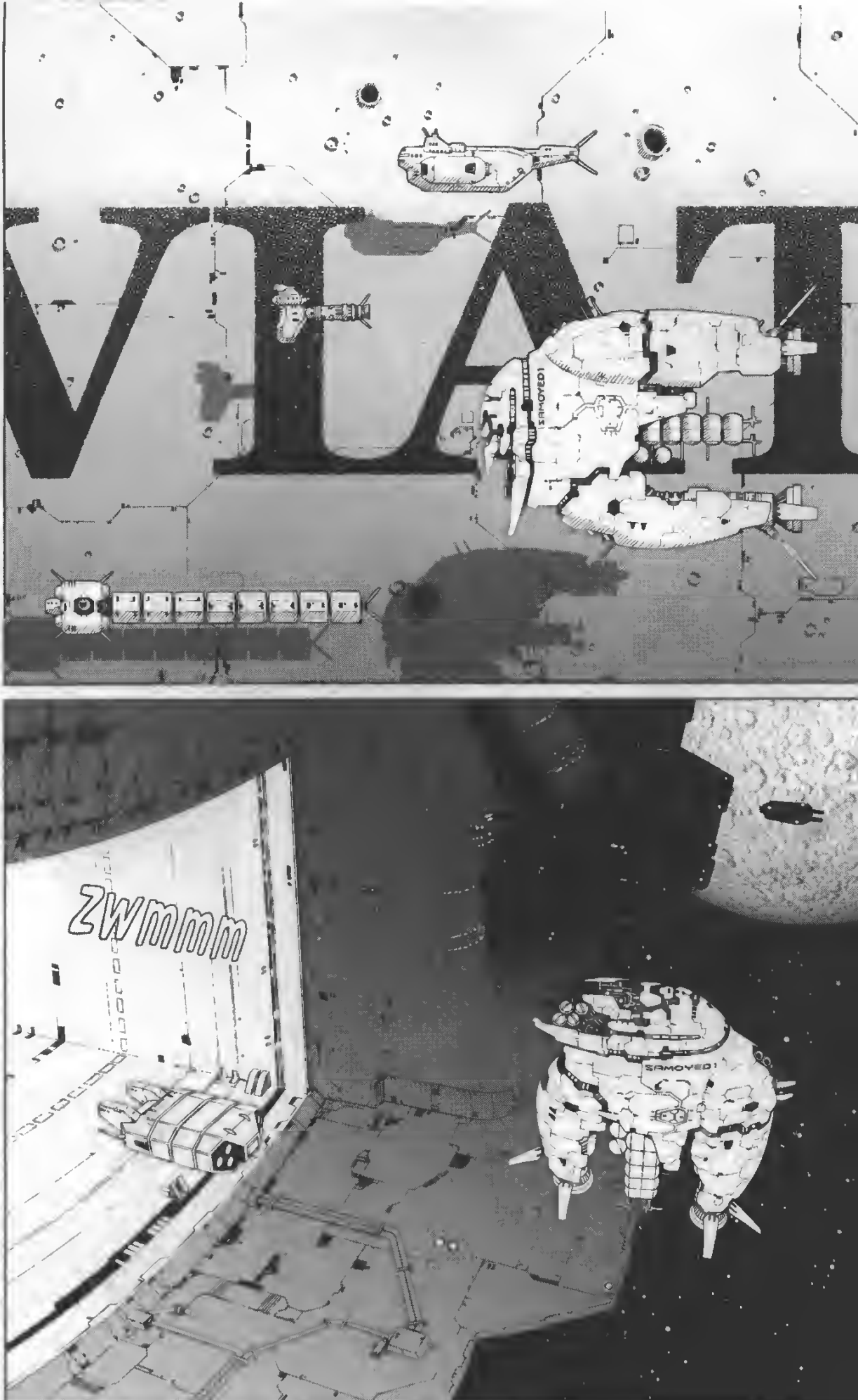
PHASE 18

One Hundred Years...!



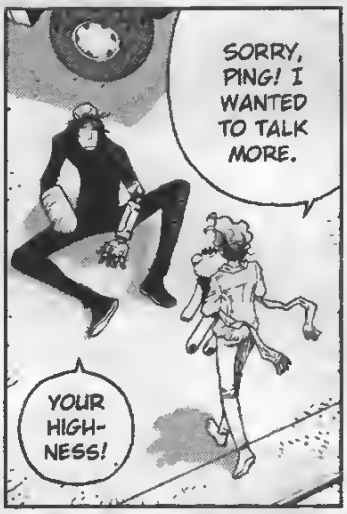
LEVIATHAN I

One of five interstellar colonial spaceships built at the Earth-Lunar Lagrange points. Other nations' distrust of the matter/antimatter reactor engine was one of the primary triggers of the Terraforming Wars, in which four of the five ships were destroyed. This sole surviving vessel, by order of the LADDER treaty, is docked and serves as a space colony.


SAMOYED1
ZWmmm
SAMOYED1

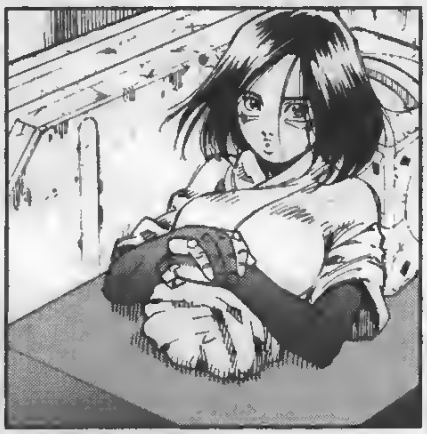
BE NICE! I'M INJURED, YA KNOW!
OWW!
bam
fwump

CHANGE YOUR UNDIES EVERY DAY!
FROM NOW ON.


SORRY, PING! I WANTED TO TALK MORE.
YOUR HIGH-NESS!

"NICE"?
BE THANKFUL YOU'RE NOT IN THE BRIG FOR STOWING AWAY!

WE'LL BE STAYING HERE A COUPLE DAYS, SO IF THERE'S ANYTHING...
YOU CAN ALL KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!



ZAZIE, DON'T YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

AWW, YOU'RE SO SHY.
NO...
...I DON'T.

.....

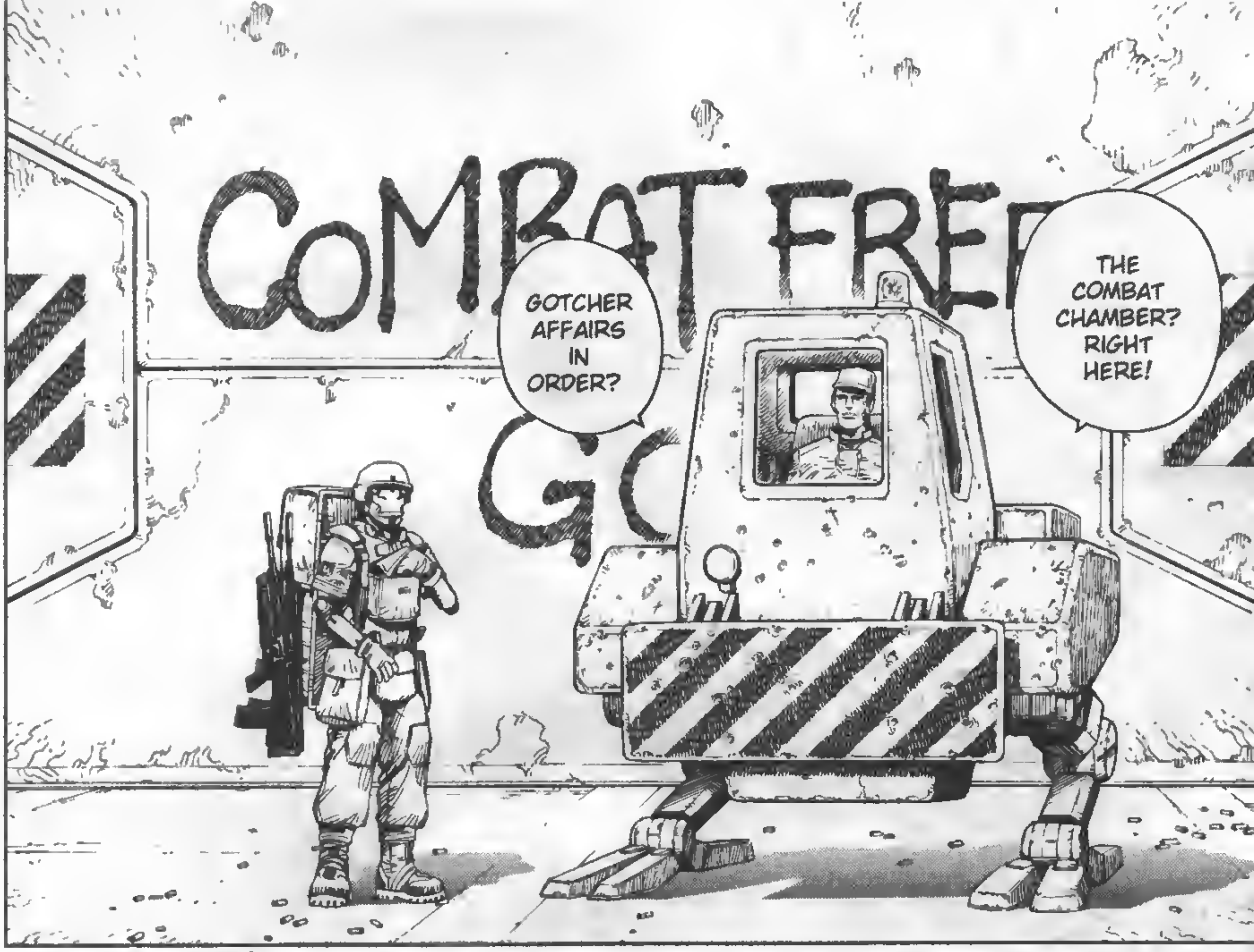
NO SHOOTING ALLOWED
GUNS & AMMO
ARMY STORE
EXPLOSIVES
FIREARMS
USED GUNS
SALE IN
GETCHER EQUIPMENT HERE—IN BULK AND CHEAP!
ADMIN-APPROVED LOW-MASS AMMO!

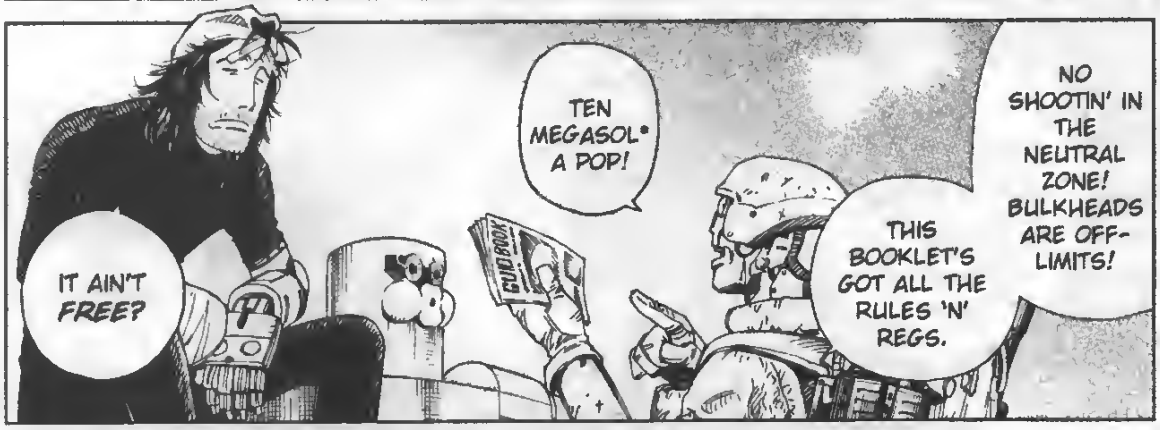
NAH!
vroom
THIS ISN'T LIKE KETHERES AT ALL...

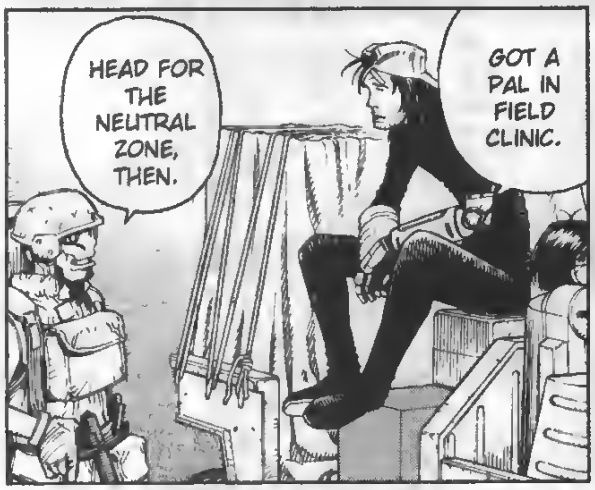
THEY'VE OPENED UP THE CENTRIFUGAL GRAVITY DISTRICT TO WAR GAMES... BRINGS IN FOREIGN CASH.
IT MAY BE PART OF THE FED, BUT MOST FOLKS ARE FOREIGN— NO UNANIMOUS TO WRESTLE WITH.

I'VE GOT A FEW ERRANDS TO RUN...

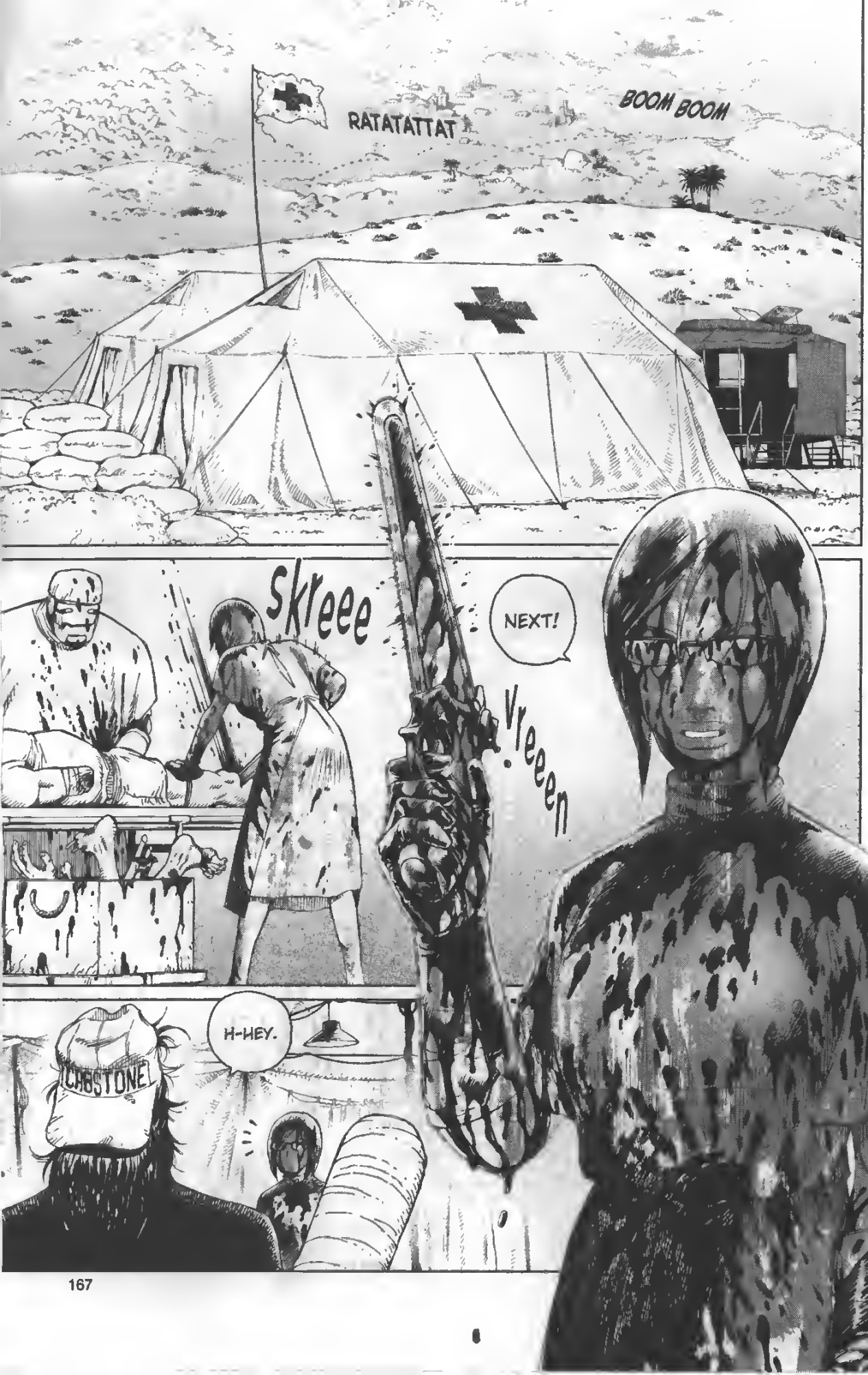
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I'LL BET.




IT AIN'T FREE?
TEN MEGASOL* A POP!
GUIDBOOK
THIS BOOKLET'S GOT ALL THE RULES 'N' REGS.
NO SHOOTIN' IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE! BULKHEADS ARE OFF-LIMITS!



Megasol: a unit of currency used in the inner planets.


RATATATTAT
BOOM BOOM
skreee
NEXT!
vreeen
H-HEY.
CABSTONE

skrrek
DOCTOR, THAT'S THE HEALTHY LEG!
LONG TIME NO SEE...
AHM.. GOT A MINUTE?
plop
AREN'T WE PICKY! WHAT'S THE DIFF'? WE'RE MAKIN' A CYBORG!
I-IT'S ME! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ME, REM?!
STONE
fwsh
Vreen
I CAN ONLY AMPUTATE ONE GUY AT A TIME!

DO YOU THINK... WE COULD START OVER?
.....
ONE HUNDRED YEARS...!
WHAT DO YOU WANT, PING WU?
YOU... YOU'VE SURE CHANGED...
WHAT ABOUT ANAS-THESIA?!
gaaah
SKREE
AND YOU JUST WALTZ BACK IN HERE?!
I'VE LEARNED HOW TO CUT OUT THE DEAD WEIGHT, PING WU.
THAT'S WHAT TIME DOES TO A PERSON.
THAT NAIVE GIRL WHO ONCE LOVED A HERO? THAT REM RAY... GREW UP.

THAT JERK!
MARTIN TOLD ME YOU WERE DEAD.
ARE YOU REALLY ALIVE?
THAT SO?
chk
...ALIVE AND WELL!
BUT LOOK! HERE I AM...
IT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH IT THAT COUNTS...
...AND WHO YOU DO IT WITH.
SURE, YOUR HEART IS BEATING AND YOU CAN DRAG YOUR BODY AROUND. BIG DEAL. I'VE DONE MORE WITH LESS.

I DON'T GET WHAT YOU MEAN...
.....

YOU'VE GOT A CUTE FRIEND RIDING WITH YOU.

LONGEVITY DOESN'T CURE STUPIDITY.
fuu
FINE.

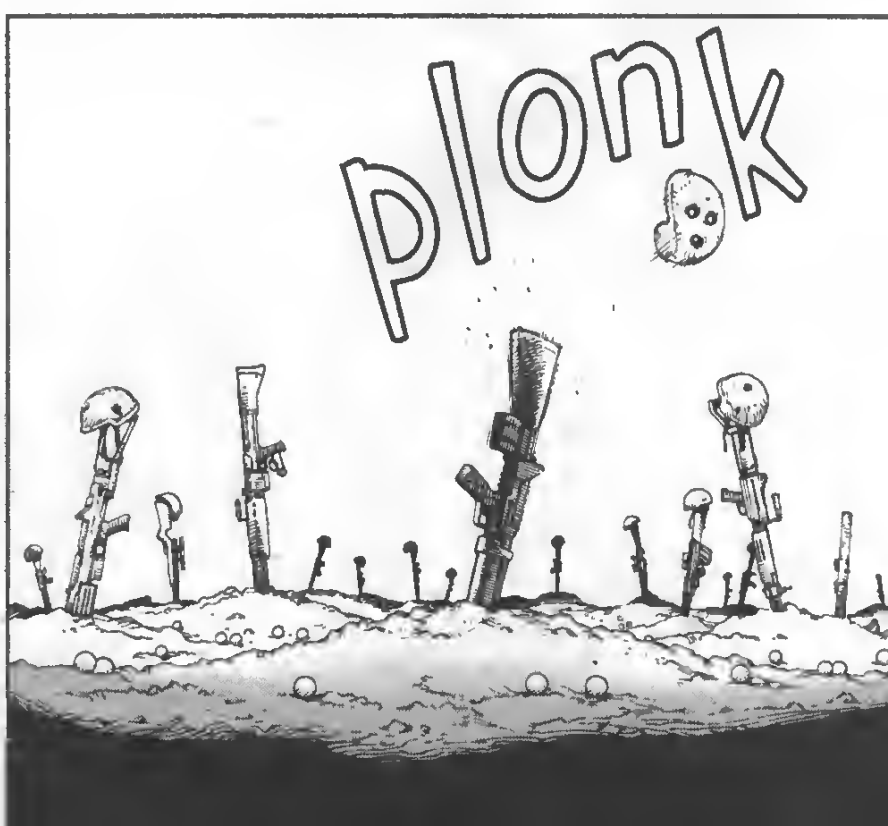
I GET THE PICTURE.
FINE.

I'LL TAKE YOU. OLD TIME'S SAKE...
GOING TO SEE MARTIN, RIGHT?

I KNOW.
DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM. NOTHING GOOD'LL COME OF IT.

thwak

AWW! THE BALL'S SLICING ALL WEIRD!

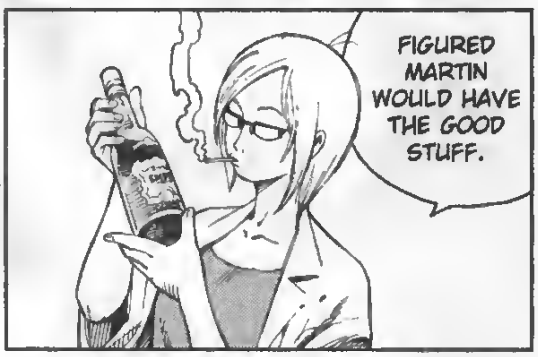

plonk

*Coriolis force: an inertial force that occurs within a rotating frame of reference. Described by French engineer Gaspard-Gustave Coriolis (1792-1843) in 1835. The radius of a space colony relying on centrifugal gravity is far smaller than a planet, so the Coriolis force is more pronounced.

SO YOU'RE THE MAIN COMMODITIES DISTRIBUTOR IN LEVIATHAN I NOW. YOU SURE MADE IT BIG.
YUP!
OH MY GAWD! I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!
gWom
P-P... PING?!
Y-YOU'VE BEEN ALIVE ALL THIS TIME?!
sob!
...THIS LI'L THING?
tik
tak
OH...
HMM?
OH, PING... YOUR HAND!
I GOT IT WHEN YOU BETRAYED ME, DUMBASS!
Ka
BLAM

EEK! I-I'M SORRY!
Wham
I'M HERE FOR PAYBACK— WITH ONE HUNDRED YEARS' INTEREST!

I'LL PASS.
CARE TO JOIN ME?


FIGURED MARTIN WOULD HAVE THE GOOD STUFF.

THAT'S NO SURPRISE.

NOT A WORD.
tmp tmp
...BUT DID PING TELL YOU ABOUT HIS PAST?
YOU SEEM TO HAVE QUITE A STORY...

HE WAS QUITE A NAME IN THE UNDER-WORLD.
WASN'T A HACKER ALIVE WHO DIDN'T FOLLOW THE WEASEL'S EXPLOITS!
PING WAS THE WEASEL. MARTIN WAS THE SKUNK.
TOGETHER, THERE WAS NO SECURITY SYSTEM THEY COULDN'T CRACK.
SURE, THEY'D PILFER MONEY FROM BANK ACCOUNTS EVERY NOW AND AGAIN, JUST TO GET BY...
...BUT THOSE BOYS HAD BIG IDEALS.

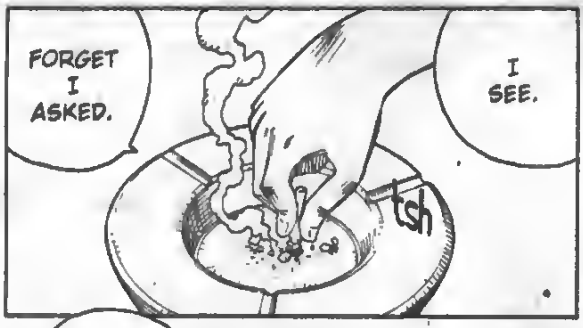
...AND HACKERS LIKE WEASEL WENT INTO OPEN REVOLT.
AFTER THE WAR, THINGS WENT TO HELL.
METHUSELYZATION PAVED THE WAY FOR STRICT BREEDING CONTROLS. THE NEXT GENERATION BECAME A *THREAT*, NOT A *PROMISE*...
HE WAS SO COOL BACK THEN!
EVERYTHING WAS LIKE A DREAM...

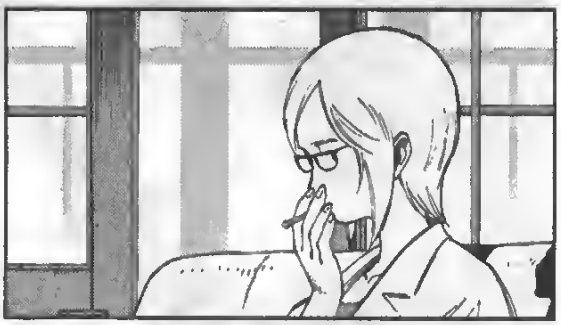
HE STARTED KILLING OFF ALL OF WEASEL'S HACKER BUDDIES, ONE BY ONE.
klink
...UNTIL ONE DAY, AN ANTI-HACKER CALLED *TRINIDAD* SHOWED UP IN LADDER.
...GOT ALL RILED UP AND READY TO TAKE ON THE BIG GUYS.
WEASEL WAS BACKED INTO A CORNER...
A ONE-MAN *COUP D'ÉTAT*, THAT BOY!
HE WANTED TO DUKE IT OUT WITH TRINIDAD, HACK INTO MELCHIZEDEK, AND TAKE OVER LADDER.
I TRIED TO TALK HIM OUT OF IT, BUT WHAT DID *I* KNOW?

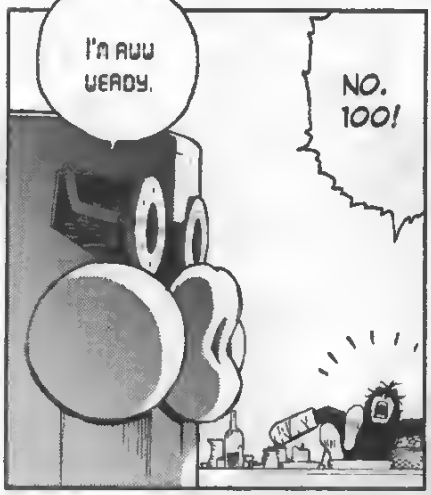
ONE HUNDRED YEARS...
WAS IT A LIFETIME AGO...
...OR ONLY YESTERDAY...?
HE LEFT ME...AND STRODE INTO KETHERES.
YOU CAN PICTURE THE REST.
ENOUGH REMINISCING... YOU'RE MAKIN' ME BLUSH.
AND JUST SO YOU KNOW...
keek keek
...THE PLAN WOULD'VE *SUCCEEDED*—IF *HE* HADN'T FREAKED OUT AND BAILED!

bam
bam
YEAH?
PING...
...THERE'S ONE THING I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK YOU.
DO YOU STILL HAVE A DREAM...
...A DREAM TO CHANGE THE WORLD?
HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!
Wmp
HA! HA! HA!
tnk

THAT NAIVE BOY WHO ONCE PLAYED THE HERO?
HE GREW UP.
CHANGE THE WORLD?
DUMBEST THING I EVER HEARD!
PEOPLE AREN'T WORTH SAVING!


FORGET I ASKED.
I SEE.
tsh




I'M ALL READY.
NO. 100!

WHAT'S WITH HER?
...?

GOOD-BYE.

W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MM-HMM.
MASTER.
ZAP!
shk
I NEED TO BOWWOW SOME ELECTWICITY.
WAIT A MI...
fft
BLACK-OUT?
HUH?

FILL 'ER UP! IT'S HIS TREAT!
YEEK!
ENOUGH JUICE THERE, LITTLE FELLA?
I WAS AWMOST BONE DWY!
ZZT
ZZLAK
MY WORLD...
BEER
BEER
blam
ratatat

NANOTECH MADE 'EM ALL IMMORTAL!
...AND WELCOME TO IT!
krk
...NONE OF THIS WOULD EXIST!
glug
IF I HADN'T STOLEN IT TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO AND GIVEN IT AWAY...
...YOU'VE GOT ME T' THANK FER ALL OF IT!
BUDDA BUDDA
KIDS OUT THERE WOULDN'T BE KILLING EACH OTHER
GET IT?
BOOM
BAM BAM BAM
THIS COMBAT CHAMBER— EVEN LADDER...

WH-WHAT?!
CI
I MADE THIS WORLD...
...SO EVERYTHING THAT'S YOURS IS MINE!
Wud
YOU'VE GOT NO RIGHT T' TALK BACK TO ME!
PIECE A' CRAP!
THAT'S GOING TOO FAR, EVEN FOR YOU!
SHUDDUP!
sk
pash
UNH...
tch tch
I HAD A HARD TIME, TOO, YOU KNOW...

AGH!
bam
fump
fwsh
BUT DO YOU CARE?!
...BUT I'M HELPING MORE PEOPLE THAN YOU EVER DID!
LAUGH AT ME ALL YOU WANT...
smak
oof
FAT SLOB!
pow
sok
ow!
WAAH! I HATE YOU!
biff
unh...
YOU'RE GONNA GET IT NOW...
YOU BLOB!

-KOFF!-
HFF
UFF
HUH?!
TWO MONTHS...AND I'LL STORM KETHERES AGAIN...
I WON'T MAKE IT OUT ALIVE THIS TIME...
.....
JUST A TEST OF WILL!
NO MORE HIGH IDEALS.

HOW'S IT FEEL?
WELL?
I'M GOOD TO GO!

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action

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